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London: LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., 39 Paternoster Row
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LIGHT *VERSUS* DARKNESS.

'SHAKESPEARE, the Greatest Genius who has ever yet lived,' taught the Divineness of Forgiveness, of Perpetual Mercy, of Constant Patience, of Endless Peace, of Perpetual Gentleness. If you can show me one who knew things better than this man, show him!! I know him not!! If he had appeared as a Divine, they would have Burned Him; as a Politician, they would have Beheaded Him; but God made him a Player.



* He taught that kindness is Nobler than Revenge!! *

The Rev. GEORGE DAWSON, M.A.

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When mercy seasons justice,
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The Deeds of Mercy.'

Shakespeare.

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Than conquest over human pain?

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but not the Raging Torrent.

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ESTABLISHED 1825.

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FOR
INFANTS,
INVALIDS,
AND
THE AGED.

BEST AND CHEAPEST.

LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1889.

The Bell of St. Paul's.

BY WALTER BESANT.

PART I.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE BRIDGE.

LAURENCE left the Successor to S. Norbery and turned Citywards, his mind a wreck, gone to pieces upon the Rock of the Unexpected. Only an hour before he had sallied forth serenely confident, his mother's Instructions in his pocket, anxious only about taking the first step. Well. That first step had been taken, and lo! it was like unto the historical kick which shattered the Castle of Cards. There was no Will: it must therefore have been destroyed. Wills, he knew very well, are never lost; they are kept carefully in strong boxes: they are sometimes kept in duplicate: the drafts or original instructions of the client are kept as well: all the papers concerning the Will witnessed by the man Mayes must have been kept by the solicitor who drew it, unless he had received instructions to destroy them. Moreover, his mother had nothing to go upon but the assurance—certainly it bore the appearance of truth—of an angry man. There was no other proof that this Will, which had been undoubtedly executed, bequeathed the Property to his housekeeper. Again, Clement Indagine—here was the most extraordinary thing in the world—must know that he was the nephew, and therefore, failing any will,

the heir: why in the name of Wonder did he not claim the estate? Why did he allow the Crown to take his property—his own undoubted property? And, things being so, what further business had he himself upon Bank Side? Why not go back to his hotel and address himself seriously to the Theatres, the Picture Galleries, the Restaurants and the streets of the West End—the only part of London which, as a rule, the Colonial visitor ever sees? On the whole he felt inclined to resent this turn of affairs. Since he could not enact the part, melodramatic but always effective, of the man who turns up in the last act to set everything right, why not go away at once?

* * * * *

Anybody who pleases may fill up the space indicated by these stars. It must be devoted to following up the further thoughts of this young man, rudely deprived of the power of doing, in order to gratify his mother, a really great, noble, virtuous, and disinterested action—that of a signal Reparation of a Great Wrong—all in capitals. This blow naturally made him, for the moment, sulky. When we follow with the tourists—a bleating flock—who come to look at the show place of some great Lord, and when we hear the heavy and heartfelt sighs which escape them as they are personally conducted through the old hall, to the library, to the drawing room, to the dining room, to the gardens, to the stables, we must always remember that these are not the sighs of spite against fortune which has left this flock so poor, but of sorrow that they are not so rich as to do great and noble deeds. With the key furnished by such a reflection, nothing is easier than to fill up this space. How greatly would many modern histories be improved if such spaces were left everywhere between the incidents, for the reader to fill up out of his own imaginative head!

I say, therefore, this space being now filled up, that Laurence was naturally sulky and resentful against Fortune, that poor goddess who for one grateful friend—and he never half grateful enough—makes every day a thousand enemies. One short hour before, he was the heir to a Property—he knew not how big it was, or how little—with which he was about to deal in a most noble and princely manner. Now he had learned, first, that the Property was of Baronial dimensions: a thing which would have made the Renunciation all the more noble: and, secondly, that his mother was not the heir to it, and that he himself would have no share or part in it at all.

When he arrived at the Bridge, he crossed to the west side

and leaned over the iron railings, still considering the new position. Bank Side lay at his feet: not the Bank bathed in sunset glow; but the Bank in the morning, looking grimy, narrow and cumbered with many wares; the Bank in the full flow and running tide of activity: every wharf and every Factory working with zeal: the Steam Hammers justifying the cost of their erection: the cranes swinging noisily: men carrying heavy crates on their backs or wheeling full barrows up and down planks between the Bank and the barges. All these things, at first, he saw, yet saw not: in order really to see things you want not only eyes but a mind bent on seeing. If, for instance, you stand aside to watch the faces in the City Streets, you will observe as the men walk swiftly along, that most of them see nothing. They go from end to end of Cheapside and see none of the things on the road, on the pavement or in the shops. Millions of things go on around us in the town as well as in the country without any man seeing or regarding them. We are only curious concerning the things we know. Perhaps, since no moment of time ever really dies, but passes away and then lives ever afterwards in the mind, one may in after ages recall these things and reflect how much richer life might have been had we dwelt on our own affairs less and kept our minds more open to the things without. Laurence, therefore, leaned over these railings and looked down upon the River and the Bank with eyes wide open, yet saw nothing, being wholly occupied with this sad reverse of fortune. He was in a trance.

This trance lasted I know not how long—nor does it matter, because in such a trance as this, when the mind is at work but wholly disconnected with the body, time does not exist. It induces the anæsthetic sleep: the eyes are open and the body walks about, dodges cabs, and avoids people; yet nothing is seen, felt, or heard. Sometimes it lasts but a second of time: sometimes it lasts a whole day:—nay, there are men so rapt in their own occupations that they see nothing else, whatever passes before their eyes, all their lives.

This trance, however, came to an end. Gradually, and little by little, Laurence discovered that just below him there was going on a great deal of business and bustle: he began to hear the noise of it: he began to see the activity of it. This was a sign that the trance was working itself out. Then, recovering consciousness, he passed through the stage of passive hearing and seeing, and began unconsciously to exercise the power of

Selection. A blessed thing it is for man that he can exercise the power of Selection. Not to see all groups, but one group: not to hear all the noise, but only a part of it, as when you prefer the talk of your companion to the rolling of the carts: not to fall in love with all sweet maidens, but with one. Laurence heard no more the noises below, nor did he see the men at work, because his eye was caught by a little group of two and by a little comedietta that was being played before him in dumb show by two persons.

They stood where an idle crane left a circle free of rusty iron, casks, bricks, pipes or any other merchandise—a crane is a thing which insists on respect and elbow room. The circle was closed in and separated from the vulgar gaze of Bank Side on two sides: on one by the house or cottage belonging to the machinery of the steam crane: on another side by an irregular stack of rusty iron chains, old plates and bits of boilers. The crane stood upon the Bank and the Bank looked upon the river, and there was the low wooden wall of thick planks, the like of which are now no longer used, to protect those who stood there. Probably Cottle the Elder, the first Academician, witnessed the setting up of this sea wall. It was a strange spot for a trysting place—if this was a trysting place. For one of the two was the girl whose auburn hair the sunset had turned into gold when she rowed the skiff straight out of the West. She looked strangely incongruous in this grimy place, standing under the crane in her light grey costume with the bunch of flowers at her throat. As incongruous—as out of place—would be the apparition of Venus herself upon a hill of Middlesboro' slag.

'It is Althea herself,' said Laurence. 'It is Althea Indagine. It is the Goddess of the Sunset. And the fellow with her is Oliver Luttrell, the chap who is going to be the President of the Royal Society. I wonder what they are doing on Bank Side in the morning. Why is not the Pride of Science in his Laboratory? Why is not the Goddess in her little Heaven? Why does she linger on Bank Side—when there are Parks and lovely places elsewhere:—on Bank Side—among the wheelbarrows and the rusty iron? How grubby it looks in the morning! And how splendid it looked last night! Althea,' he said, taking advantage of his position, 'looks almost better in her natural colours than when the sunset threw a golden cloud about her. Am I an eavesdropper? Is it mean to watch? But at least I cannot hear what they say. To watch Althea—myself unseen—is a venial and a pleasant sin.'

He could not hear her voice, it is true, but he became interested in the dumb show which followed. And since in ordinary conversation young people do not use the little exaggerations of gesture with which the mime emphasizes the situation, the plot of the little drama was difficult to make out. A short-sighted man would have seen from the Bridge nothing but a young man and a girl talking together. Well, this happens everywhere. To him there would have been no comedy at all. But the young Australian had eyes as good as any sailor—as keen as any game-keeper. He saw, not only the little gestures which a frigid civilisation still allows for the indication of emotion, but a tell-tale play of eyes and face and colour. The play was simple and without much incident. Yet it held the House—consisting of one spectator.

The young man Oliver said something. He said it with meaning and he looked at the girl steadily when he said it.

The girl started and changed colour. Then she replied, speaking quickly, as could be seen by the movement of her lips. And she turned away and looked out upon the river.

He made another little speech, and from the motion of his hands it was evident that he wished to conciliate her, but she shook her head.

‘Have they quarrelled?’ said Laurence. ‘Is it a lovers’ tiff? Can Althea—Althea—be engaged to that little black beast?’

Then she turned upon him and seemed to speak out at some length and with freedom.

He laughed—it is not pretty to see a man laugh if you cannot hear him as well. And she stopped speaking and turned her face again to the river.

‘It looks more than a lovers’ quarrel,’ said Laurence. ‘She is really angry with him.’

Then it was the other actor’s turn. He explained the position, using hands and head and always gazing upon the girl. Then his hand went out and tried to take hers. She snatched it away and replied. She was evidently much moved, and her eyes filled with tears. Then she spoke again. She was remonstrating with him or entreating him to do something. He listened with a dogged stubborn bearing.

Then she turned away and left him standing upon the Bank alone.

‘It is all over,’ said Laurence.

Not quite. For as he looked again he saw the face of the

young man change suddenly and curiously. He was clearly in a rage : when the girl was gone his mouth widened : his nose flattened : his eyes seemed to sink into sockets.

'Good Lord!' cried Laurence. 'What an ugly beast it is! He looks like a skull with the hair on.'

Perhaps the position of the spectator—up in the gallery so to speak—assisted in producing this strange effect.

'What does it all mean?' he asked, his interest thoroughly awakened. 'I believe the future President of the Royal Society has asked the Goddess of the Sunset to be his bride and she has refused him because he is so ugly. Yet, no,—I never heard of any man being refused because he was ugly. Women don't care two pence about a man's looks. Perhaps he has done something. Can he have stolen a barge? Or, perhaps the Goddess has no yearning for Science. She looked at one time as if she was answering some threat. Could he be such a beast as to threaten her? No. That is impossible. If I thought that, I would . . . I would . . . step down the stairs and chuck him into the river. But he could not.'

'Yet what matter is it to me?' he went on. 'I've got nothing to do here. My mother's letter is now so much waste paper. And yet that girl——' He became pensive. 'I must wait a little if only to find out what they are all about. There is the poet,' he said, 'who is a poor poet and yet refuses to lift his little finger to become wealthy—why? There have been plenty of poor poets since the world began, but I never remember a poor poet who might have been rich if he had chosen. And there is the Patriot—not to speak of the respectable Mayes. A story is going on of which I cannot guess either the beginning, or the middle, or the end. Now, if I stay, I shall perhaps find out this story. That will be interesting and perhaps it will not take very long. And, if I am lucky, I shall be able to strike a blow on the right side—that is, of course, the side of Althea. I shall call it the Story of the Silent Heir, or the Heart of Althea. Other people may call it what they like : that is what I mean to call it.'

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

IN RETIREMENT.

WHEN the Cathedral bell began to strike nine, in the leisurely and dignified manner proper to a Cathedral Bell, Althea put down her work and proceeded to make certain arrangements. That they were part of the daily routine was manifest by the unhesitating and mechanical manner in which she performed her task. A ship's steward could not lay the cloth, even for the sixth time in the day, with less waste of time for consideration than Althea showed in setting out the little round table on the hearth-rug, placing the chess-board upon it, arranging the pieces, and putting the two armchairs in position. Everybody would understand at once, merely from her manner of doing it, that the game of chess was a daily pastime. The addition of two pipes, a jar of tobacco, and a box of lights showed that the players were men. And so rapidly did she make these preparations that the last stroke of nine was still ringing and resounding in the air when she added the tobacco as the finishing touch.

The room was that one in the house with the Doric pillars, to which twenty years before Dr. Luttrell had brought the little gipsy. The only change of any importance made during this long period had been the addition of a piano laden with music. There were also a few flowers in a glass—I believe that formerly there were no flowers: and if anything else, there was the presence of 'work.' The whole of woman's history is contained in the special meaning of that word. A man's work may be symbolised by the spade, the pen, the chisel,—by every instrument that his wit has devised: for a woman's work the needle is the only symbol. Courage, my sisters: the world changes and you shall be changed—we shall all be changed. In another generation you shall, if you wish, as no doubt you will wish, wield the spade and brandish the pitchfork; you shall carry the rifle and handle the heavy ordnance. Perhaps the curtains—I believe that formerly there were no curtains—betrayed a woman's presence: mere man would have been contented with white blinds, or green Venetians, or, at least, with hangings less dainty. The windows, which gave upon New Thames Street, were open at the top, for reasons which could

be explained by residents in that street to the full satisfaction of curious inquirers. If, gentle reader, you lived in New Thames Street, you would open your windows at the top. There was a bookcase full of books: they were works of modern literature and poetry. But a man of letters would not fail to note that there were no new books among them. And though there were books on the table, there were no journals, magazines, or new novels. One or two oil paintings hung on the wall—landscapes of an old-fashioned kind, imitations of the masters of fifty years ago. On the mantles shelf rested a photograph in a frame: it was the likeness of a young man in the little cap, the shawl over the shoulder, and the boots of a Heidelberg student—none other, in fact, than Oliver, once the gipsy, now a Lecturer in Physical Science, newly made and youngest Fellow of the Royal Society. Over the mantles shelf hung a large portrait in crayons representing another young man. He wore long flowing curls and his hair rose in a romantic wave or crest above a capacious forehead: his whiskers also appeared to have felt the tender influence of the curling iron: his head was thrown back as if in defiance of the world: his right hand, the position of which was artistically indicated by a single stroke or two, was thrust into his bosom: his lips were parted—they were frank, eager, mobile, delicate, sensitive, curved lips: the sunshine lay upon those lips—no other sunshine than that of the Muses' smiles: his eyes, which matched the lips and were at once scornful, inspired, terrible, loving, large and full, flashed with a light of genius such as, I am very certain, no portrait painter of the present day would dare to give to the most richly endowed of living men—but in those days the light which never shone from mortal eyes was considered necessary and becoming and natural in the portraits of poets and men of genius. Have we not seen it flashing from the eyes of Byron, Keats, Shelley? Nay—no rhymester so small but he too must have the bright and piercing light of inspiration glowing in his eyes. Photography has killed the eye in a fine frenzy rolling. There are even poets whose eyes are fishy. Under the portrait was the autograph of the subject, written in a fine flowing hand, with a flourish at the end—most men of genius formerly cultivated a characteristic flourish after their name—'Clement Indagine.' The date of the portrait—1851—was also added.

When Althea had completed her arrangement of the chess table she stood for a moment, as even the ship's steward above mentioned will do when he has laid even his seventh or eighth

cloth of the day—to catch the artistic effect. We are always, when one comes to think of it, setting the scene for the next Act, and Woman is the domestic stage manager. It was the last Act of the day for which she set this scene: the silent game of chess and the evening tobacco with which her father the Poet and her uncle the Doctor finished the day, while she sat beside them, also in silence, working or reading, unless she played softly so as not to disturb the combinations of the game; save for her music the house was very silent always.

Then the door opened and the original of the crayon portrait appeared. You have seen him already—the man with the long white flowing hair and the brown velvet jacket. His curly black whiskers had now grown downwards and made a beautiful white beard, but he was still to be recognised as the natural development of the portrait of 1851. Many men at sixty are not the natural development, but the distortion, of their own portraits at five-and-twenty. Althea greeted him with a smile on her lips and a doubt in her eyes. Something unusual, she perceived, had happened. Her father's eyes were restless: his hands were trembling: his cheek was flushed: there was excitement in his face.

'Well, dear,' she said, 'you have been on the Bank this evening? Did you speak to anyone? The Doctor was called out an hour ago. Will you wait for him, or will you take your pipe at once?'

'Called out, was he? Sick people show a great want of consideration sometimes. No, dear—no—I will wait a little.' He sat down and began mechanically to play with the pawns, opening with an old and favourite gambit. 'Yes, child, yes.' He answered her question with a curious abruptness. 'Yes, I have been on the Bank. Lucius Cottle was there, and the Chevalier was there, and a stranger, a young gentleman, was with them—and—and—a very curious and remarkable thing happened—I am not sorry that the Doctor has been called out—a very strange thing indeed, a thing which I never looked for—I would rather talk it over quietly with you, before he comes back. Yet, to be sure, it ought not to be strange. You will not be surprised, I dare say, though you will certainly be pleased.'

'What was it? The young gentleman was Mr. Laurence Waller, I suppose, the new lodger at the Cottles?'

'Possibly. Possibly. What interest have I in the man? None whatever. What does it matter to me if a man takes a lodging on Bank Side on purpose to look at me?'

'To look at you?'

'To look at me, Althea,' he repeated sternly, as if there must not be allowed the least doubt upon that point. 'As I passed this company of three and nodded to Lucius—were we not at school together?—the young man gazed at me with a curiosity and interest which would have been impertinent, but that I overheard him whisper to Lucius Cottle, "Oh! Is that really the Poet?—Really, the Poet?" he asked. A second time and a third time I passed them on my walk to and fro, and every time that young man followed me with eyes of curiosity. Well, Althea, I cannot help it.' He leaned back in an attitude of resignation. 'If the world has at last found out my retreat I must abandon any further pretence and just expect to be besieged. It may be natural, no doubt, but it is, I confess, unexpected. I might have expected it thirty years ago. Then it would have seemed more natural. Now, it causes a certain kind of shock. Yet it is not displeasing.'

'Mr. Waller has come from Australia,' said his daughter, wondering. 'He told me that he had come on business. To be sure that need not prevent him from showing a natural curiosity in the appearance of a poet.'

'From Australia! Come from Australia! All that distance on purpose to look upon my face! This, Althea, is gratifying. I confess that it gratifies me very much. It is one of the few clear and tangible proofs of Fame which meet us. We poets move the world, but sometimes only know it by repeated Editions. Sometimes I have thought that I did wrong not to read the papers. I should at least have caught the regrets of the world—its regrets and its repentance for having silenced a Poet—as if Poets were as plentiful as cob-nuts! But no—no—the regrets would have come too late. Let me have no more—no more—to do with the present.' He got up and looked at his own portrait. 'Thirty years ago,' he said sighing, 'I was thirty years old. It was young to be driven from the world. But Keats was killed—they killed him—at an earlier age. Where are they—the men who drove me forth? Dead perhaps—forgotten perhaps—languishing, very likely—long since in merited obscurity. As for the man they hounded down, people now come from the uttermost parts of the earth—I say, Althea, from the uttermost parts of the earth—only to gaze upon him. I am now old, but they have not forgotten me. They have forgotten, I think, the men who did the wrong; but the Poet they have not forgotten.'

'They can never forget you, father.'

'As I came home,' he said with such an elation in his voice and such a light in his eyes—though still far short of the electric spark shown in the Portrait—as his daughter had never before witnessed, 'I began to consider what this might mean. And I understand now—oh! yes'—his voice sank to a happy murmur. 'You have made me understand. The love of the English-speaking races for a Poet does not begin in far Australia: it is carried thither from home—from these shores: it begins at home: if a man's fame is firmly established over there it must be still more firmly planted here. Do you follow me so far, Althea? It must be still more firmly planted here. Very well. Then think. My poems must therefore be, by this time, household words. They must be learned in schools and quoted in articles: they must have been made, long since, the subject of essays and criticism—reverent criticism—in the great Quarterlies, which move the thought of the world'—it has been already explained that this Poet lived still in the Fifties, when the great Quarterlies were still great. 'And they must be read,' he continued, 'in America and . . . and . . .' He turned quite pale and tottered. The thought of his own greatness, thus grown silently and unperceived by himself, was too much for him. 'And now they come, from the uttermost ends of the world, only to gaze—to gaze upon the Poet. If they love me so much in Australia, what must they do in England—in London—across the river—almost at my very feet?

'Oh!' His daughter was carried away with him by this Vision of Universal Fame. 'If they love you in Australia, they must love you ten times as much at home.'

'There cannot be a doubt, my dear,' he replied, trying to be cold. 'I see it all plainly. While I have been waiting here in obscurity the Poems have been slowly—slowly, but surely—sinking into the hearts of the people and circling wider and wider over the world. All the way from Australia! Then think of the power which those poems must have become—here—there—in America—everywhere—all round the globe—the habitable globe. The Englishman speaks to half the globe—nothing less. Why, my dear, a man ought to be satisfied with such success as this. It atones. My daughter, tell me'—he spread out his arms as if they had been the wings of Pegasus—'tell me—have I lived in vain?'

He did not expect any answer to this question—nor was there any answer possible save the murmurous assent of filial piety. Then he turned to the bookcase and took down a volume—it was

an octavo of the form always until quite recently used by poets—and held it affectionately between his two hands. ‘I cannot open it, Althea,’ he said, cuddling and hugging and pressing the volume to his bosom. ‘Never once, since I retired, have I desired to open it. This, my dear, is what the world cannot understand. It is the sacredness of verse: of this book have I made an altar on which I have laid all that is best and noblest in myself.’ He bowed his head over his own book as one who worships. And his eyes softened and glowed. ‘Having placed it there, and knelt before the altar, and prayed awhile, I came away. The precious part of me—the Immortal part—is here—between these two boards.’ His eyes grew humid, his voice sank. He fondled the book again affectionately and replaced it on the shelf. ‘It is for others to read it now, not for me. I have done my part. It is for you, my child, to use it for the uplifting and the strengthening of your soul. Yes—yes—I know. You have so used it—yes—yes—in your thoughts and in your daily conversation—I have watched you day by day—I have seen the influence of that verse. From communion with his poetry at last you reflect your father’s mind. My dear,’ he laid his hand tenderly on Althea’s head, ‘if I had but one reader in all the world, and that reader were my daughter, I should not have lived in vain.’ He sighed again, and descended to a lower level.

‘Tell me about this young man from Australia,’ he said, sitting down. ‘He says he has come on business from Australia, does he? Australian business on Bank Side? Is the colony of New South Wales going to buy scrap iron and empty petroleum casks? And he actually takes a lodging in Bank Side! I have lived here for thirty years and I have never before heard of a stranger coming to live for choice in Bank Side. Why should he? He calls it business, does he? My dear, the excuse is too transparent. But he is young and we will excuse him. Business! Ha! ha! Youth is modest and does not like to confess even its enthusiasm. Why, after all, I like him all the better for it. These reticences, these shrinkings, these hesitations—they are sometimes the note of a great mind—I like him all the better. Well, my dear, I thought to have slipped through life unseen. But it seems as if that dream was to be dispelled.’

‘Dear father,’ said Althea, taking his hand, ‘you must think of me and of my pride in you if people come to look at you.’ She was now perfectly and completely carried away by this vision of popularity. ‘Remember that the more popular you become,

the prouder it will make me. But, indeed, I could never be prouder of my father—whatever glory may be showered upon him—than I am already.'

'The sight of that young man,' the Poet continued, getting up again restlessly, 'has brought back the memory of the old life. Why? I do not know. It forces itself upon me now and then unbidden. The old life among the wits and the poets. We sat in Fleet Street Taverns—there were the Cock and the Cheshire Cheese and the Rainbow and the Mitre and Dick's—over port and whisky punch—Dickens used to make gin punch, I remember—and we talked till the small hours: and such talk! I suppose they sit there still to drink and talk! But most of them must be dead. Thirty years ago! Thackeray and Dickens and—oh! I knew them all—I knew them. I sat in familiar intercourse with them all. There were Charles Reade, Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Albert Smith, Bulwer Lytton, Monckton Milnes, Douglas Jerrold—I cannot remember all their names. Where are they all now? It was a glorious time. And I was with them and one of them. And yet they suffered me—these my friends suffered me—to be driven out through jealousy and spite. Well: it is long ago now, and an old story. Althea, I am restless this evening.' He shivered as one that hath a fever upon him. 'I feel as if something was impending. I feel as if I must go back to those taverns and be welcomed by my old friends in the time of triumph.—I am disturbed.—Something is going to happen.'

'O father!—all because a young gentleman looked at you?'

'Something, my dear,' he repeated obstinately, 'is certainly going to happen.' He sat down again and took up his pipe as if he would show how a true Philosopher should confront any fate.

It was, if you consider it, a safe thing to prophesy because the word 'something' covers a large area and may be interpreted in many ways, as, for instance, a disappointment with a breakfast egg at one end of things, or an earthquake at the other end. In this case the Prophet was justified by the event because something did happen. The street door was opened and slammed and voices were heard in the Hall. Althea started. One of them was the voice of their new acquaintance—the very stranger from Australia of whom they had been talking. Althea started, because a visit from a new acquaintance was an absolutely unique event in her experience. She was now nineteen years of age. Not once during her whole life had she ever before known the arrival of a

stranger. Their family circle was never broken. Oliver, before he went to Germany and was still at St. Olave's School, brought no boys home to Bank Side: the Cottle girls ran in and out as they pleased: but no visitor ever called.

'Clement,' said the Doctor cheerily, 'I have brought a young gentleman from Australia who desires the honour of your acquaintance.'

'The great honour,' said this stranger.

Mr. Indagine bowed coldly—such tribute to a poet must be received as of every day occurrence: but then his natural goodness of heart came back to him and he held out his hand.

'I am very pleased, Sir,' he said, 'to receive you. We live retired and—and in fact—we see few visitors. You have come from Australia'—it was not in human nature to refrain from one look of triumph in the direction of his daughter—'all the way from Australia in order to obtain this introduction?'

'It was one of the reasons of my journey,' said the young man with truth.

'And what, Sir,' asked Mr. Indagine, 'does the Australian—the Antipodal world—say now of the attack—the ferocious and unprecedented attack—which drove me out of human society?'

'Ah!' the Doctor echoed, 'what do they say now?'

'Why—really'—Laurence showed a momentary confusion—'we are a young people and have hardly yet begun to discuss things literary. Among those, however, who know the circumstances, there is but one opinion.'

'There can be but one opinion,' said the Doctor.

The Poet bowed. 'It is gratifying to find the world convinced at last. And which, Sir, of the poems is your own especial favourite?'

'I have no favourite,' Laurence replied hastily and avoiding Althea's eyes which were turned upon him, expectant. 'Do not question me about your poems, Sir, or I may be led to speak in your presence too warmly.'

'Nay, nay'—Mr. Indagine actually laughed—when had Althea seen him laugh before? 'Well: you may respect the modesty of an author, young gentleman, in his presence: but—outside—outside—say all you think and feel—freely. Now let us talk. Althea, my dear, play something softly. Gentle music encourages ideas.'

The chess-board was neglected: the pipe was laid down: and the Man of Letters appeared. Mr. Indagine talked.

When people live together a great deal they leave off talking

unless something unexpected happens, or unless, which is not uncommon, they belong to that social level which is perpetually occupied with the behaviour of the brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces and sisters-in-law. That behaviour, which is always such as could never have been expected, furnishes a topic which endures throughout the longest life, is always fresh and is always interesting. But in this circle there were no near relations whose conduct could be discussed. Mr. Indagine had married the Doctor's only sister, who was dead: and his own brother had long since gone away and disappeared. It will, therefore, be understood that these two elderly gentlemen had for many years ceased to talk much. Therefore it was as if the Poet should break out in a new line when he began to discourse upon literature.

It was also as if he were letting free a flood long dammed up. Or as if he were pouring out of a vessel full to the brim and overflowing: or as if he had been waiting all these years for a sympathetic listener. The Doctor, in fact, was not possessed of the literary mind.

Althea meanwhile continued to play: it was old music—Weber's Last Waltz—one of the Songs without Words—music that flowed softly and filled the mind with peace and made the imagination as wax to be moulded by the speaker. The Australian disciple, to whom the discussion was addressed, listened to the Sage with great deference, occasionally inclining his head in order to show that his attention was riveted and that he did not mean to lose one single word.

The discourse was remarkable not only because it turned wholly upon the Literature of the Fifties—any essayist might have done the same thing—but because it spoke of these works as if they were the newest things out, and because the speaker employed in illustrating his points the echoes of that time. The great books of the Fifties include *In Memoriam*, *David Copperfield*, *Esmond*, *The Woman in White*, *Adam Bede*, *Cranford*, *Christie Johnston*, and *Hypatia*, among many others. This Decade hath, forsooth, a goodly record. Yet it must be owned that between the current ideas of '88 and those of '58 there is a gulf of more than thirty years. To listen to the old man whitehaired, eloquent, who ignored all that had been done since the latter date caused a curious and not unpleasant sensation. Laurence began pleasantly to feel as if he were himself transported back to the Fifties and was sitting in judgment not upon

his ancestors but upon his contemporaries. He was at the Tavern, in the circle of the very men themselves. Thackeray came in and went out : Douglas Jerrold said a good thing full of impudence : Dickens looked in and laughed : the night was young and the circle was full. The presence of the girl sitting beside him on her music stool did not interfere with this Vision of the Past—One who falls into such a Vision sees through solid bodies, dresses, furniture, and the like. If Ghosts are transparent, so also are solid things when Ghosts are behind them. If the Poet could so charm them with speech alone, what could he not do if he were to begin to sing?

In the middle of the talk, the other young man, Oliver, opened the door and stole quietly in. He looked extremely surprised at the sight of the visitor and sat down in silence. But the magician had no power over Oliver. He remained in the Present, and looked on with eyes which betrayed boredom and lack of interest.

At last the talker ran down. Then they all came back to the Present again, and sat no longer at the Garrick Club or in Cock or Rainbow Tavern, but in the little room of the house in New Thames Street which leadeth off Bank Side.

‘We will talk again, young gentleman,’ said Mr. Indagine, in conclusion. ‘Your views are sound and your observations show reading and grasp.’ Laurence had not uttered one word. ‘Come again and come often while you stay in London. It is pleasing and novel to learn the literary and poetical attitude of Australia. There is not in this civilised part of London one single Club or Tavern at which a man may hope to find a scholar or a poet. Yet the taverns still stand in which Shakespeare and his friends caroused near the Globe and the Rose. There is not here even a second-hand book shop.’

‘He must not go yet,’ cried the Doctor. ‘What? Has Bank Side no hospitality? Althea, my dear, Mr. Waller will take——’

This is an age of Apollinaris water. Therefore, one must refrain from explaining what it was that Laurence was offered and what he accepted. Suffice it to say that the Poet took some and the Doctor too, and that Laurence took tobacco with it, and that it was in a big glass and sparkled if held up to the light. The Poet relapsed into silence, but he sat with a benignant smile, and he suffered, without a murmur, the conversation to run on quite modern topics and things of local interest.

Then Laurence spoke of Bank Side and of the people he had already met, especially the interesting family of the Cottles. And

then, looking furtively at the Poet, he launched a question. It was a question even more closely connected with his visit than the immortal poems.

'There was once,' he said slowly, 'a certain Mr. Norbery living near here. Did you know anything of him?' He addressed the Doctor, but he looked, as has been said, towards the Poet.

This innocent question fell into the circle like a bomb-shell.

Mr. Indagine started violently and his face became a deep crimson. The Doctor also started and looked at his brother-in-law as if curious to see how he would take it. And Althea laid her hand upon her father as if to soothe and restrain him. And Oliver looked suspicious. What had he done?

'He is dead. Mr. Norbery is dead,' said the Doctor. 'He died five years ago. Let us not talk about him.'

'He was a bad man,' Mr. Indagine sat up with a sudden change of manner as if stung into rage. 'A hard, cruel man——'

'Yes, father, yes. But he is dead,' said Althea, patting his hand.

'Is he dead? Let his name be never mentioned in my hearing.'

'I am truly sorry,' said Laurence, 'that I did mention it.'

'Is he dead?' Mr. Indagine repeated. 'I have never cared to ask whether he was alive or dead. If he is dead and can do no more harm, so much the better for the world. Let us all forget his name as speedily as may be.'

'Why—' thought Laurence, 'they actually know nothing!' But Oliver looked at him with suspicion from the black pent-house of his thick eyebrows.

But Mr. Indagine's wrath died out like a fire of shavings, and he settled himself again in his chair.

'Say no more, young gentleman. Say no more. You have helped me to a pleasant evening. You have brought me a laurel from Australia. I should not be human if I were not gratified. Come often and talk with me. We will not speak of ignoble people—but of the Muses and their favourites. We will wander among the asphodels of Parnassus. Good night, Sir,' he grasped Laurence's hand warmly. 'Good night, my dear Sir—come again—come often.'

CHAPTER II.

FAIR FRIENDSHIP.

ONCE more Althea stood at the head of the Stairs, dressed for the river in a straw hat and a loose jacket that left her arms free. The boat was rocking with the swell of the tide at her feet: beside her stood her new acquaintance, Mr. Laurence Waller.

‘If you would really like to come with me,’ she said. ‘I generally go alone: but if you are sure that you would like——’

‘I should like nothing better,’ he replied. ‘Let me take the sculls and you shall steer and tell me about the river as we go. Remember that I have never been on it yet.’

It was Saturday afternoon, a little after two. Work was knocked off: the men had ceased to run up and down the planks with their baskets of broken glass or their loads of scrap iron: the great gates of the wharves were closed: the barges were left alone with their cargoes until Monday. A Sabbath calm already prevailed upon the Bank.

Althea ran down the steps and took her place in the stern, while her companion followed and untied the painter and shoved off. Such progress in Fair Friendship may be made in two or three days by a careful young man who takes pains: such are the prizes awarded to such young men as deserve them: and so great was the gratitude felt by this young lady towards the man who had come all the way from Australia to gaze upon her father.

The day was bright: a fresh breeze crisped and curled the water into little dancing waves: it drove the light clouds across the sky and caused the flying shadows to chase each other over the broad surface of the river: it made Althea’s cheek to glow and her eyes to brighten. Eyes more beautiful: cheek more glowing: Laurence thought he had never seen.

He addressed himself, at first, to getting out from the rows of barges into mid-stream and to showing the young lady that an Australian, as well as a Thames waterman, may know how to feather his oars with ease and dexterity. Now a girl’s admiration of ease and dexterity in any art is in direct proportion to her own knowledge of that art; so that Althea, who understood good rowing, was quick to appreciate the neatness with which her companion handled the sculls. She was also, during the half hour that followed, enabled to recognise strength of muscle and length of wind. This young man could not only row but he could last.

They went up stream with the slack end of the flowing tide as far as Chelsea Reach, which is a good long pull. Althea was silent at first, but presently began to beguile the way by pointing out the places, houses, churches, bridges, and palaces as they passed. She talked with more courage when she perceived that her companion listened with the greatest interest—indeed her short experience of him had already distinguished him as a young man of sympathetic manner. She found him far more ready to listen than to talk. There is a kind of young man who, in presence of a girl, is tempted to put on side, to walk round and show his muscles, to swagger and crow, and in other ways to imitate the male Turkey, for purposes of mashing. There is another kind—a much more subtle and dangerous young man—who sits in humility, contented to listen in silence and to encourage the girl. Laurence belonged to this kind of young man. In the middle of Chelsea Reach he stopped, obedient to the Captain of the ship, and turned her bows. Then they both fell into silence gazing upon the river. And presently Laurence remarked that the smile had died out upon Althea's lips; that her face was become grave: and that her eyes were dreamy. She looked as one carried away in a vision.

Chelsea Reach is never crowded with boats: at three o'clock even on a Saturday in June it is too early for the London Clubs, but there were on the water one or two scullers in the light craft which seem so easy to be pulled through the water that one wonders how it is they can cause the rower to pant and puff, his face to flush: his brow to stream, his manly chest to heave and his arms to quiver just as much as if he were tugging at the oar of the accursed galley of Algiers or the biggest barge of Bank Side. There were no penny steamboats visible: as for canoes, randans, pleasure boats, and steam launches, one does not expect them lower down than Putney. There were two or three barges just beginning to drop down stream, blundering and staggering, with the tide: and there was a noisy little tug, all engine and paddle wheels, which hauled and lugged along a team of unwilling lighters each with one man on board labouring like ten men to keep her bows straight and her stern clear.

Five minutes passed—ten minutes: but the girl remained silent and motionless: her thoughts far away. What was she thinking of? The stillness of her face suited her beauty: a really sweet face seems to look best with a certain gravity upon it. She sat as motionless as if she had been in a trance.

Laurence dipped the sculls and pulled a short stroke. The girl started and sat upright.

'I have been dreaming, I am afraid,' she said.

'I think you have. Do you often fall a dreaming?'

'Yes—very often. When one is quite alone, you know—at home when my father is in his study and my uncle is out with his patients: and on the river when I am by myself—it is so easy to fall into dreams.'

'If I could ask you to tell me your dreams, I might interpret them for you, perhaps.'

'They are not worth telling. Are you very tired? Shall I change places with you?'

'I am not in the least tired, thank you. The river is splendid. I am truly grateful to you for letting me come with you—what a blessed chance that I have remained at Bank Side!'

'My father was afraid that you would think it such a poor place—and go away. Cassie said she would give you two days. We who always live there, you see, hardly understand how poor the place must look to a stranger.'

'Well—Bank Side, it is true, does look best with a little gilding of sunset upon it. But there is the river.'

'Yes—there is the river—the river.' She leaned forward as if to see better the stretch of water around her. 'The river'—the words seemed to have a magnetic effect: her eyes again assumed the look of one whose thoughts are far away: her voice fell into a murmur and she spoke as if she was talking to herself without thinking of her companion. 'The river! It is always changing: sometimes it laughs as if it thought of nothing but happiness and enjoyment: and sometimes it rolls along grey and heavy as if it were thinking of the poor people along the shores who are so miserable and so wicked: and sometimes it is as blue as the sky and sometimes it is the colour of mud. But every day the water rolls up and then rolls down again—every day—so full—so full of strength. We stand upon the bank and watch: ten thousand years ago the tide rolled up and down, and it will go on thousands and thousands of years after we are dead.'

'When we are no longer standing on the shore,' said Laurence, 'the river may do just exactly what it pleases. Let us be happy with the present.'

Youth, I suppose, he meant, has nothing to do with the past or with the future; of tenses, the present alone belongs to youth. Of moods, the indicative and the imperative are meant for the use

of youth. For age there are the optative and subjunctive among moods, and the past and future—I mean the Prophetic Future—among tenses. They bestow upon that chilly period of life either its chief consolations or its bitterest pangs. I am sorry that Vicesimus Cottle did not say this. As a grammarian he would have been pleased with the illustration. Unfortunately, it never occurred to him.

Althea went on as if he had not spoken.

'It is the tide which gives life to the river. If it were not for the tide there would be a stream always flowing down. To stand on the bank and watch the current always always running away without any rest or pause—to think that it goes on running all the night as well as all the day: coming one knows not whence and running one knows not whither, must fill the soul with a kind of terror as if, like Time, it was always carrying something away from us. But the ebb and the flow—it is as if the river came to help us every day.'

'It does,' said Laurence. 'The tide was first turned on when barges were invented.'

Althea looked up and laughed. She was shaken out of her thoughts and called back to companionship again. Her eyes lost their dreamy look, and she sat upright and caught the strings as if she meant to attend to business.

'You must not mind my idle talk,' she said. 'I come upon the river so much and I am alone for such long hours that I sometimes talk out loud the things that are in my head.'

'No—no—go on talking. I will listen.'

'Well then—I am glad that you like the river and I am glad that your first introduction to the river has been in sunshine.'

'We have plenty of sunshine in Sydney,' said Laurence, 'and we like it. They told me that London is the city of Perpetual Fog. Yet behold!'

'We do have fogs,' Althea confessed. 'That cannot be denied. But to-day I am sure no sky could be brighter—not even the sky of Sydney.'

'That is quite true,' he replied.

'And no air finer.'

'Again, quite true.'

'And I own that the sun does make a very great difference. Look at that big lighter blundering along in the mid stream. You would almost think that it was a live thing, a hippopotamus or something—rejoicing in her clumsy play. And look at that

noisy little tug, how she pulls along the team of barges as if they weighed nothing, and it was a joy and pride for the little creature to put forth her strength. Well—on a cloudy day the big lighter would fill you with pity because it would seem so blind and helpless. And the tug would make you think of a slave writhing under the lash.'

'Yes,' he said. There was no need to say more than just to show that he was listening.

'Sometimes the clouds close over and the rain falls. Then one sees nothing: the banks are hidden: the barges and boats vanish: one is all alone on the water, and the rain beats on the river as if it were lashing and scourging it. Then one trembles and thinks of terrible things. I have a dream which comes to me often, of being all alone on a waste of waters with nothing visible and the rain beating down. Or one may be caught in a fog. Then the only thing is to keep close in shore and so to creep home. But the fog is not so terrible as the dark cloud and the pelting lashing rain. Once there fell a thunderstorm upon the river when I was upon it. The lightning played over the waters, and a great ball of fire burst close to the boat. I thought that the boat and I together might be struck and suddenly destroyed and no one would ever know what had become of me. And I wondered how many people in this great world would ask the question. Half a dozen in all. It is not many to know out of all the millions.'

'Not many,' Laurence echoed with a little doubt in his mind as to the healthiness of this solitary communing on the river.

Then she changed and again came back, so to speak, to life.

'You are a stranger,' she said, 'and I suppose you do not understand what the river has always been to London. Formerly it was the highway of the people. They did not go up and down the streets: they could not because they had no carriages and the roads were rough and there were no footpaths: they took boat and so went up and down the river at their ease—it must have been much more pleasant than an omnibus. I could show you where they landed at the old stairs all along the North bank from Westminster to Wapping. Then they had sports upon the river and Pageants, and all the gentlefolk had their own boats just as in Venice everybody has his gondola. The King had the Barge of State: the Lord Mayor had his Barge of State: the City Companies, the Bishops, the great Lords, all had their Barges of State; and went up and down the river in them. In those

days swans swam about the stairs: salmon were caught above Bridge: people used to go angling in the river: the bank was lined with stately houses sloping down to the river's edge—' She sighed heavily. 'The river must have been beautiful in those days. I am sure there could not have been so much mud to begin with.'

'I believe the company in the boats was sometimes a little mixed,' Laurence objected, timidly.

'Well, then. Think, even now, what the river is to the city, though we no longer use the boats. Think how it blows away the wasted air and brings up the fresh breeze with every tide.'

'Yes,' said Laurence. 'I will try to think about it in this way.'

'And remember what beautiful things have been written about the river. But perhaps you do not read poetry.'

'I have read some poetry,' said Laurence. 'It is not quite the same thing.'

'If you had known the Thames so long as I—Have you read Spenser? He, you know—

Walked forth to ease his pain

Along the shore of silver-streaming Thames:

Whose ruddy bank, the which his river hems,

Was painted all with variable flowers

And all his meades adorned with dainty gems

Fit to deck maidens' brows.'

'I have heard those lines.'

'Then can you tell me who wrote—

May all clean nymphs and curious water dames

With swan-like state float up and down thy streams—?

No? It was Herrick. You ought to know Herrick. And Pope has written about the river—and—and—oh! many other poets.'

Laurence made haste to change the subject. He might have been examined in Mr. Indagine's immortal verse: in which case a disgraceful pluck awaited him.

'You are not afraid of rowing about alone?'

'Not in the least. There is nothing to fear. You can easily keep out of the way of the barges and the steamers. Out on the river you are quite free. I come here every day—it is always fine some part of the day—if only for half an hour. At home there are mean streets everywhere and men who get drunk and beat their wives: how can one walk for pleasure in those streets? On the river there is nothing mean and ugly and vulgar, though

I confess that some of the buildings on the banks might be more picturesque. And then one is quite alone, and if you row up above Westminster you are quiet. You can think in peace. If one is in good spirits it is happiness enough only to row along singing—and if you feel low the fresh air and the exercise quickly bring you back to a cheerful mind.'

'And always alone?'

'Always in the day. Sometimes, in the evening, Cassie or Felix will come with me. But Felix rows in a Club Four, and despises my poor little boat.'

'Then sometimes, I suppose, you land and look about.'

'Oh! no.' Althea shook her head. 'That would spoil all. I should only find modern streets. As it is, the banks are crowded with the old things that I have read of in the books about London. Quantities of things happen up and down the river. When I am rowing along I can amuse myself with bringing back the people and their houses and gardens. I should be sorry, indeed, to land and find the old houses and the gardens gone and only mean streets in their places.'

'You live in a dead and gone London,' said Laurence. 'Has the living London no attraction for you?'

'I do not know it. But the dead and gone London lives still. Nothing ever really dies, I have read, except the memory of wickedness. For instance, there is Battersea Park—before you—behind that Terrace.'

'Oh! Battersea Park? St. James's Park I know and Hyde Park.'

'This is Battersea Park. I dare say if we were to land there we should find a place like Southwark Park. Twenty or thirty years ago I believe it was only a dismal stretch of bare fields where people came to shoot pigeons and to make dogs fight and catch rats. That must have been a dreary time. But I forget that and remember a time much older, when Lord Bolingbroke lived here and had a great House with gardens down to the river bank. There was a Terrace there and he used to walk up and down with his friends. Oh! I often see them when I—fall a dreaming, as you say—Pope and Steele and Addison and Swift and Arbuthnot—I see them all. They walk up and down slowly in little companies of twos and threes, carrying their hats under their arms and stepping daintily in shoes and white silk stockings. I wish I could hear what they say, but that I can never do: and it would be bad manners to pull nearer the bank in order to listen. would it not?'

‘Clearly. Addison himself in one of his papers reproaches young ladies in boats for listening to private conversation. If you see any of these good people this afternoon, tell me, will you? But I believe I must be short-sighted in the matter of ghosts.’

‘I will tell you,’ the girl replied gravely. ‘But they only come when I am alone. On the other side—over there—Sir Thomas More lives; he has got a beautiful house built of red brick with delightful casement windows: it is covered with ivy cut and trimmed close and clinging round the stone mullions: he walks in his garden, which is full of apple and mulberry trees and standard roses, with his daughter Margaret. He has the kindest and wisest face in all the world. But I have not seen him lately. Lower down there was formerly a big Botanic Garden. I believe they have covered it with houses now, but I often meet the Physicians in their boats going to see the simples growing under glass. Every day in summer they go there, and I believe they drink wine together in a tavern after their visit. Nobody now looks so wise as the last century Physicians with their black velvet coats, their high peaked wigs and their gold-headed walking canes. They are so full of wisdom and dignity that they must have been able to cure every disease under the sun.’

‘Are there any on the river at this moment?’

‘No—You have driven them away, they can only be seen by solitary persons. Chelsea is very rich in beautiful places. There is Ranelagh over there. It is a lovely place: there is a great round room in it for music and dancing lit by thousands of oil lamps, and there are gardens where the people walk about, the ladies in hoops and patches and the men with swords and purple coats. Sometimes I meet barges, not our great lumbering Bank Side barges—but beautiful pleasure boats with music in the bows and the company in the stern, rowing up to Chelsea for a night at Ranelagh.’

‘Alas!’ said Laurence, looking up and down the river and then across it and shading his eyes so that the sun should not hide their vision. ‘I see nothing, not even Lord Bolingbroke on the Terrace.’

‘Would you know him if you did see him?’

‘N—no—I think not. I might suspect, you know. Perhaps that is the reason why I see nothing.’

‘It is pleasant to imagine all these things,’ said Althea, looking at him gravely. ‘They become quite real if you imagine them often. We have got the old books at home—the essays,

and poems, and plays—and I have read them all, and it seems sometimes as if the life of the last century was the only life worth having, and ours was a mere existence to read about the past.'

'Why,' said Laurence, 'if that is all you have of life—to read about the past——'

'But you—who know the world—don't you think that the world of the last century must have been ten times as pleasant as it is now?'

'No, Miss Indagine. I believe, on the other hand, that we have got the very best of everything.'

'But in the old days there were assemblies and dances and water-parties and all kinds of things.'

'Well—but——' Laurence looked up surprised, 'isn't there plenty of dancing and music and singing still? There are the Theatres—did they act better then than they do now? Did they dance better? Did they sing better? Were the ladies more beautiful or the men more polished? I doubt it very much. I am quite satisfied, Miss Indagine, with the present.'

'Yes—perhaps,' she said doubtfully. Then she laughed a little. 'Oh! of course it is as you say, only it seems I should have seen something of this life if I had lived a hundred years ago. None of these things come to Bank Side, and I have come to believe that they exist no longer. The world of Society——' she looked across the river to the steeples and towers of the West—'it is over there somewhere—I should like to see it just for once. I can picture the life of the last century but not the life of the present.'

'But surely you do not stay always at Bank Side. Surely, you go, sometimes, somewhere, away from the—the place——' he looked as if he was suppressing something—an adjective perhaps.

'No, I never leave Bank Side.'

'You never leave—you never go away at all?'

'No—and no one ever comes to us. We are hermits—my father and Dr. Luttrell and I, we three together. Oliver used to come for his vacations: but he never liked the place, and, to be sure, the streets all round us are very mean. Since he came back from Germany he only comes occasionally.'

'Is his mind wholly given up to science?' asked Laurence. Then he remembered the comedietta of the Bridge and wished he had not asked the question.

Althea changed colour. Then she made answer in a constrained voice. 'I cannot say how Oliver disposes of his mind.'

He gives his father very little of his society. I mean only that we live a very retired life and are wholly ignorant of society. When you are tired of us,'—she said this with a perfect absence of coquetry,—'you will go away and forget us and we shall go on again in the old quiet way. Until you do get tired of us, come and talk with my father as often as you can. He likes you—and it is long since he talked with any one of the outside world. For thirty years he has lived apart from his fellows.'

'Tired of you?' cried Laurence—but checked himself. Could one believe that there was a hermit—a girl hermit—living under the shadow of St. Paul's? But to think—no society at all! 'Tell me,' a sudden thought seizing him, 'tell me is it possible that you have never been to a dance?'

'It is quite possible. I do not in the least know how people dance; only I am sure that the minuet has quite gone out.'

'Nor to a Theatre? Nor to a party of any kind?'

'I have been nowhere. We have no friends—no one visits us—and the only girls I know are Cassie and Flavia.'

'Good Heavens! What do you do every day and all day?'

'I read and work—I go out in my boat—I play a little—I work a little. That is all. It is not so dull as you would think, but sometimes I wonder what it is like in the world.'

'Then in the summer. You don't stay at Bank Side in the summer?'

'Yes, we do. We have very little money, you know. My father has the house in which we live and three or four more. It is all we have got to live upon, and my Uncle's practice is all among the poor people. If we were only rich—'

'Why,' Laurence longed to tell her, 'you *are* rich: you are very rich indeed. You have got an immense estate waiting for you.' But he refrained. The time was not yet come.

'You live in London and yet you do not know London.'

'Oh, yes, I do. I know the City of London very well and I know the Borough; as for the City, I am sure there cannot be, anywhere, a more delightful place. We have got books about the City—Cunningham and Timbs and others—and I read all that has happened in the streets and then walk about them and remember it all. Saturday afternoon is a good time because the Churches are generally open and the streets are quiet. But Sunday morning is best because the streets are quite empty and deserted. Oh! You must not think that I do not know London.'

'Miss Indagine,' said Laurence after a little pause, 'I propose an exchange.'

‘What is it?’

‘One to my own advantage entirely. Show me these curious places in the City and the Borough, and I will show you the West End. I have walked once down Regent Street and Bond Street and Piccadilly and I seem to know the West End right through. I have also looked in at the Academy. What do you say?’

Althea hesitated with caution newly born. It is by instinct that we suspect a snake in the grass. Yet she knew nothing about the designs of the Male Heart Breaker, of the Designer, of the Man with no Intentions, of the mere Amuser, or of the Catholic Admirer. Man the Tippler she knew, because she frequently met him in the streets, but Man the Designer she knew not. Yet she instinctively hesitated. But the eyes which met hers were so frank and honest that she yielded.

‘You will show me the World of Society and Pleasure?’

‘I cannot take you into the actual houses or to their dances and parties. But I can show you the outside of things, if you please.’

‘Yes, I should like to see the outside of things. I accept the exchange.’

‘Very good, and now we are off Bank Side. Poor old Bank Side! It really does want a little gilding of the sunset. And it is Saturday afternoon. Let us begin at once. You shall take me to the City of Ghosts and Shadows; you shall show me the old merchants in their wigs and lace ruffles, and I will show you the young gentlemen in their tight collars and their pointed boots. I am *very* glad, Miss Indagine,’ as she sprang out of the boat and ran up the stairs. ‘I am very glad that I stayed at Bank Side. Why, I might have been wasting my time at the Grand Hotel, wandering about Piccadilly looking at the fine ladies, or even sitting in the stalls of the Theatres, looking at the play.’

(To be continued.)

Cool Orchids.

THIS is a subject which would interest every cultured reader, I believe, every householder at least, if he could be brought to understand that it lies well within the range of his practical concerns. But the public has still to be persuaded. It seems strange to the expert that delusions should prevail when orchids are so common and so much talked of; but I know by experience that the majority of people, even among those who love their garden, regard them as fantastic and mysterious creations, designed, to all seeming, for the greater glory of pedants and millionaires. I try to do my little part, as occasion serves, in correcting this popular error, and spreading a knowledge of the facts. It is no less than a duty. If every human being should do what he can to promote the general happiness, it would be downright wicked to leave one's fellow men under the influence of hallucinations that debar them from the most charming of quiet pleasures. I learn also that the misapprehension of the public is largely due to the conduct of experts in the past. It was a rule with growers formerly, avowed among themselves, to keep their little secrets. When Mr. B. S. Williams published the first edition of his excellent book, he fluttered his colleagues sadly. The plain truth is that no class of plant can be cultivated so easily, as none are so certain to repay the trouble, as the Cool Orchids.

Nearly all the genera of the enormous family have species which grow in a temperate climate, though not in the temperate zone. At this moment, in fact, I recall but two exceptions, *Vanda* and *Phalænopsis*. Many more there are, of course—half a dozen have occurred to me while I wrote the last six words—but in the small space at command I must cling to generalities. We have at least a hundred genera which will flourish anywhere if the frost be excluded; and as for species, a list of two thousand would not exhaust them probably. But a reasonable man may content himself with the great classes of *Odontoglossum*, *Oncidium*,

Cypripedium, and Lycaste; among the varieties of these, which no one has ventured to calculate perhaps, he may spend a happy existence. They have every charm—foliage always green, a graceful habit, flowers that rank among the master works of Nature. The poor man who succeeds with them in his modest 'little bit of glass' has no cause to envy Dives his flaunting Cattleyas and 'fox-brush' Aerides. I should like to publish it in capitals—that nine in ten of those suburban householders who read this paper may grow the loveliest of orchids if they can find courage to try.

Odontoglossums stand first, of course—I know not where to begin the list of their supreme merits. It will seem perhaps a striking advantage to many that they burst into flower at any time, as they chance to ripen. I think that the very perfection of culture is discounted somewhat in this instance. For the gardener who keeps his plants at the *ne plus ultra* stage brings them all into bloom within the space of a few weeks. Thus, in the great collections, there is such a show during April, May, and June as I attempted to describe some months ago at St. Albans—and hardly a spike the rest of the year. At a large establishment this signifies nothing; when the Odontoglossums go off other things 'come on' with equal regularity. But the amateur, with his limited assortment, misses every bloom. He has no need for anxiety with this genus. It is their instinct to flower in spring, of course, but they are not pedantic about it in the least. Some tiny detail overlooked here and there, absolutely unimportant to health, will retard florescence. It might very well happen that the owner of a dozen pots had one blooming every month successively. And that would mean two spikes open, for, with care, most Odontoglossums last above four weeks.

Another virtue, shared by others of the cool class in some degree, is their habit of growing in winter. They take no 'rest;' all the year round their young bulbs are swelling, graceful foliage lengthening, roots pushing, until the spike demands a concentration of all their energy. But winter is the liveliest time. I think any man will see the peculiar blessing of this arrangement. It gives interest to the long dull days, when other plant life is at a standstill. It furnishes material for cheering meditations on a Sunday morning—is that a trifle? And at this season the pursuit is joy unmixed. We feel no anxious questionings, as we go about our daily business, whether the *placens uxor* forgot to remind Mary, when she went out, to pull the blinds down; whether Mary followed

the instructions if given; whether those confounded patent ventilators have snapped to again. Green fly does not harass us. One syringing a day and one watering per week suffice. Truly these are not grave cares, but the issue at stake is precious: we enjoy the boon of relief proportionately.

Very few of those who grow *Odontoglossums* know much about the 'Trade,' or care, seemingly. It is a curious subject, however. The genus is American exclusively. It ranges over the continent from the northern frontier of Mexico to the southern frontier of Peru, excepting, to speak roughly, the empire of Brazil. This limitation is odd. It cannot be due to temperature simply, for, upon the one hand, we receive *Sophranitis*, a very cool genus, from Brazil, and several of the coolest *Cattleyas*; upon the other, *Odontoglossum Roezlii*, a very hot species, and *O. vexillarium*, most decidedly warm, flourish up to the boundary. Why these should not step across, even if their mountain sisters refuse companionship with the *Sophranitis*, is a puzzle. Outside Brazil, however, they abound. Collectors distinctly foresee the time when all the districts they have 'worked' up to this will be exhausted. But South America contains a prodigious number of square miles, and a day's march from the track carries one into *terra incognita*. Still, the end will come, and at no very long date. The English demand has stripped whole provinces, and now all the civilised world is entering into competition. We are sadly assured that *Odontoglossums* carried off will not be replaced for centuries. Most other genera of orchid propagate so freely that wholesale depredations are made good in very few years. For reasons beyond our comprehension as yet, the *Odontoglossum* stands in different case. No one has raised a plant from seed—that we may venture to say definitely. Mr. Cookson and Mr. Veitch, perhaps others also, have obtained living germs, but they died incontinently. This fact is regarded as strange; it supplies a constant theme for discussion among orchidologists. But I think that if we look more closely, it becomes consistent with the other facts known. For among importations of every genus but this, a plant bearing its seed capsules is frequently discovered; but I cannot hear of such an incident in the case of *Odontoglossums*. They have been arriving in scores of thousands, year by year, for half a century almost, and nobody recollects observing a seed capsule. This shows how very rarely they fertilise in their native home. When that event happens, the *Odontoglossum* is yet more prolific than most, and the germs, of course, are not so delicate

under their natural conditions. But the moral to be drawn is that a country once stripped will not be re clothed for ages.

I interpolate here a profound observation of Mr. Roezl, just brought to my notice. That wonderful man remarked that *Odontoglossums* grow upon branches thirty feet above the ground. It is rare to find them at thirty-five feet, rarer at twenty-five; at greater and less heights they do not exist. Here, doubtless, we have the secret of their reluctance to fertilise; but I will offer no comments, because the more one reflects the more puzzling it becomes. Evidently the seed must lodge in myriads above and below that limit, under circumstances which, to our apprehension, seem just as favourable as those at the altitude of thirty feet. But it does not germinate. Upon the other hand, *Odontoglossums* show no such daintiness of growth in our houses. They flourish at any height, if the general conditions be suitable. Mr. Roezl discovered the secret nevertheless, and in good time we shall learn further.

To the Royal Horticultural Society of England belongs the honour of first importing orchids methodically and scientifically. Messrs. Weir and Fortune, I believe, were their earliest employés. Then a few wealthy amateurs took up the business, such as the late Duke of Devonshire. But 'the Trade' came to see presently that there was money in this new fashion, and cultivated it so vigorously that the Society found its exertions needless. Messrs. Rollisson of Tooting, Messrs. Veitch of Chelsea, and Messrs. Low of Clapton distinguished themselves from the outset. Of these three firms one is extinct; the second has taken up, and made its own, the fascinating study of hybridisation among orchids; the third still perseveres. Twenty years ago, nearly all the great nurserymen in London used to send out their travellers; but all except Messrs. Low have dropped the practice. They are satisfied with correspondents, who forward a shipment from time to time. The expenses of the collector are heavy, even if he draw no more than is due—and the temptation to make up a fancy bill cannot be resisted by some weak mortals. Then, grave losses are always probable—in the case of South American importations, certain. It has happened not once, but a hundred times, that the toil of months, the dangers, the sufferings, and the hard money expended go to absolute waste. Twenty or thirty thousand plants or more an honest man collects, brings down from the mountains or the forests, packs carefully, and ships. The freight alone may reach from three to eight hundred pounds—I have personally

known instances where it exceeded five hundred. The cases arrive in England—and not a living thing therein! A steamship company may reduce its charge under such circumstances, but again and again it will occur that the speculator stands out of a thousand pounds clean when his boxes are opened. He may hope to recover it on the next cargo, but that is still a question of luck. No wonder that men whose business is not confined to orchids withdrew from the risks of importation, returning to roses and lilies and daffydownillies with a new enthusiasm. There is another point also, which has varying force with different characters. The loss of life among those men who ‘go out collecting’ has been greater, proportionately, than in any class of which I have heard. In former times, at least, they were chosen haphazard, among intelligent and trustworthy employés of the firm. Trustworthiness was a grand point, for reasons hinted. The honest youth, not very strong perhaps in an English climate, went bravely forth into the unhealthiest parts of unhealthy lands, where food is very scarce, and very very rough; where he was wet through day after day, for weeks at a time; where ‘the fever,’ of varied sort, comes as regularly as Sunday; where from month to month he found no one with whom to exchange a word. I could make out a startling list of the martyrs of orchidology. Among Mr. Sander’s collectors alone, Falkenberg perished at Panama, Endres at Rio Hacha, Wallis in Ecuador, Schröder in Sierra Leone, Arnold in the Orinoco. Sir Trevor Lawrence mentions a case where the zealous explorer ‘waded for a fortnight up to his middle in mud,’ searching for a plant he had heard of. I have not identified this instance of devotion, but we know of rarities which would demand perseverance and sufferings almost equal to secure them. If employers could find the heart to tempt a fellow-creature into such risks, the chances are that it would prove bad business. For to discover a new or valuable orchid is only the first step in a commercial enterprise. It remains to secure the ‘article,’ to bring it safely into a realm that may be called civilised, to pack it and superintend its transport through the sweltering lowland to a shipping place. If the collector sicken after finding his prize, these cares are neglected more or less; if he die, all comes to a full stop.

Thus it happens that the importing business has been given up by one firm after another, and the enterprise of Mr. Sander, at St. Albans, threatens to give him a monopoly. For the last five years he has restricted his operations—comparatively—keeping

but ten travellers employed, or twelve on occasion. But I understand that this 'reduction of output' has now ceased. At the beginning of the new year Mr. Sander's regular staff of collectors will number twenty, quartering the orchidiferous regions of the world, like hounds after game. So much for the business part of our subject.

Odontoglossums, as I said, belong to America—to the mountainous parts of the continent in general. Though it would be wildly rash to pronounce which is the loveliest of orchids, no man with eyes would dispute that *O. crispum* is the royal family of this genus, and *O. crispum Alexandræ* the reigning queen. She has her home in the States of Colombia, and those who seek her make Bogota their headquarters. If the collector wants the broad-petalled variety, he goes about ten days to the southward before commencing operations; if the narrow-petalled, about two days to the north—on mule-back, of course. His first care on arrival in the neighbourhood—which is unexplored ground, if such he can discover—is to hire a wood, that is, a track of mountain clothed more or less with timber. I have tried to procure one of these 'leases,' which must be odd documents; but orchid farming is a close and secret business. The arrangement concluded in legal form, he hires natives, twenty or fifty or a hundred, as circumstances advise, and sends them to cut down trees, building meantime a wooden stage of sufficient length to bear the plunder expected. This is used for cleaning and drying the plants brought in. Afterwards, if he be prudent, he follows his lumber men, to see that their indolence does not shirk the big trunks, which give extra trouble naturally, though they yield the best and largest return. It is a terribly wasteful process. If we estimate that a good tree has been felled for every three scraps of *Odontoglossum* which are now established in Europe, that will be no exaggeration. And for many years past they have been arriving by hundreds of thousands annually! But there is no alternative. A European cannot explore that green wilderness overhead; if he could, his accumulations would be so slow and costly as to raise the proceeds to an impossible figure. The natives will not climb, and they would tear the plants to bits. Timber has no value in those parts as yet, but the day approaches when Government must interfere. The average yield of *Odontoglossum crispum* per tree is certainly not more than five, large and small together. Once upon a time Mr. Kerbach recovered fifty-three at one felling, and the incident has grown into a legend: two or three is the usual number.

Upon the other hand, fifty or sixty of *O. gloriosum*, comparatively worthless, are often secured. The cutters receive a fixed price of sixpence for each orchid, without reference to species or quality.

When his concession is exhausted, the traveller overhauls the produce carefully, throwing away those damaged pieces which would ferment in the long hot journey home, and spoil the others. When all are clean and dry, he fixes them with copper wire on sticks, which are nailed across boxes for transport. Long experience has laid down rules for each detail of this process. The sticks, for example, are one inch in diameter, fitting into boxes two feet three inches wide, two feet deep, neither more nor less. Then the long file of mules sets out for Bogota, perhaps ten days' march, each animal carrying two boxes—a burden ridiculously light, but on such tracks it is dimension which has to be considered. On arrival at Bogota the cases are unpacked and examined for the last time, restowed, and consigned to the muleteers again. In six days they reach Honda de Magdalena, where, until lately, they were embarked on rafts for a voyage of fourteen days to Savanilla. At the present time, an American company has established a service of flat-bottomed steamers which cover the distance in seven days, thus reducing the risks of the journey by one half. But they are still terrible. Not a breath of wind stirs the air at that season, for the collector cannot choose his time. The boxes are piled on deck; even the pitiless sunshine is not so deadly as the stewing heat below. He has a store of blankets to cover them, on which he lays a thatch of palm leaves, and all day long he souses the pile with water; but too well the poor fellow knows that mischief is busy down below. Another anxiety possesses him too. It may very well be that on arrival at Santa Marta he has to wait days in that sweltering atmosphere for the Royal Mail steamer. And when it comes in his troubles do not cease, for the stowage of the precious cargo is vastly important. On deck it will almost certainly be injured by salt water. In the hold it will ferment. Amidships it is apt to be baked by the engine fire. Whilst writing I learn that Mr. Sander has lost two hundred and sixty-seven cases by this latter mishap, as is supposed. So utterly hopeless is their condition, that he will not go to the expense of overhauling them; they lie at Southampton, and to anybody who will take them away all parties concerned will be grateful. The expense of preparing this shipment, a reader may judge from the hints given;—the

Royal Mail Company's charge for freight from Santa Marta is 750*l*. I could give an incident of the same class yet more startling with reference to *Phalaenopsis*. It is proper to add that the most enterprising of assurance companies do not yet see their way to accept any kind of risks in the orchid trade; importers must bear all the burden. To me it seems surprising that the plants can be sold so cheap, all things considered. Many persons think and hope that prices will fall, and that may probably happen with regard to some genera. But the shrewdest of those very shrewd men who conduct the business all look for a rise.

I have been speaking hitherto of Colombian *Odontoglossums*, which are reckoned among the hardiest of their class. Along with them, in the same temperature, grow the cool *Masdevallias*, which probably are the most difficult of all to transport. There was once a grand consignment of *Masdevallia Schlimii*, which Mr. Roehl despatched on his own account. It contained twenty-seven thousand plants of this species, representing at that time a fortune. Mr. Roehl was the luckiest and most experienced of collectors, and he took special pains with this unique shipment. Among twenty-seven thousand, two little bits survived when the cases were opened; the agent hurried them off to Stevens's auction rooms and sold them forthwith at forty guineas each. But I must stick to *Odontoglossums*. Speculative as is the business of importing the northern species, to gather those of Peru and Ecuador is almost desperate. The roads of Colombia are good, the population civilised, conveniences abound, if we compare that region with the orchid-bearing territories of the south. There is a fortune to be secured by anyone who will bring to market a lot of *O. polyxanthum* in fair condition. Its habitat is perfectly well known. I am not aware that it has a delicate constitution; but no collector is so rash or so enthusiastic as to try that adventure again, now that its perils are understood; and no employer is so reckless as to urge him. The true variety of *O. Hallii* stands in much the same case. To secure these species the ardent explorer must march in the bed of a torrent and on the face of a precipice alternately for an uncertain period of time, with a river to cross about every day. And he has to bring back his loaded mules, or Indians, over the same pathless waste. The Roraima Mountain begins to be regarded as quite easy travel for the orchid hunter nowadays. If I mention that the canoe-work on this route demands thirty-two portages, thirty-two loadings and unloadings of the cargo, the reader can judge what a 'difficult road' must be. In his ascent

of the Roraima this year, Mr. Dressel, collecting for Mr. Sander, lost his herbarium. Savants alone are able to estimate the awful nature of the crisis when a comrade looses his grip of this treasure. For them it is needless to add that everything else went to the bottom.

Lycaste also is a genus peculiar to America, such a favourite among those who know its merits that the species *L. Skinneri* is called the 'Drawing-Room Flower.' Professor Reichenbach observes in his superb volume that many people utterly ignorant of orchids grow this plant in their miscellaneous collection. I speak of it without prejudice, for to my mind the bloom is stiff, heavy, and poor in colour. But there are tremendous exceptions. In the first place, *Lycaste Skinneri alba*, the pure white variety, beggars all description. Its great flower seems to be sculptured in the snowiest of transparent marble. That stolid pretentious air which offends one—offends me, at least—in the coloured examples, becomes virginal dignity in this case. Then, of the normal type there are more than a hundred variations recognised, some with lips as deep in tone, and as smooth in texture, as velvet, of all shades from maroon to brightest crimson. It will be understood that I allude to the common forms in depreciating this species. How vast is the difference between them, their commercial value shows. Plants of the same size range from 3s. 6d. to 35 guineas.

Lycastes are found in the woods, of Guatemala especially, and I have heard no such adventures in the gathering of them as attend the *Odontoglossums*. Easily obtained, easily transported, and remarkably easy to grow, of course they are cheap. A man must really 'give his mind to it' to kill a *Lycaste*. This counts for much, no doubt, in the popularity of the genus, but it has plenty of other virtues. *L. Skinneri* opens in the depth of winter, and all the rest, I think, in the dull months. Then, they are profuse of bloom, throwing up half a dozen spikes from a single bulb, and the flowers last a prodigious time. Their extraordinary thickness in every part enables them to withstand bad air and changes of temperature, so that ladies keep them on a drawing table, night and day, for months, without change perceptible. Mr. Williams names an instance where a *L. Skinneri*, bought in full bloom on Feb. 2, was kept in a sitting room till May 18, when the purchaser took it back, still sound. I have heard cases more surprising. Of species somewhat less common there is *L. aromatica*, a little gem, which throws up three or four short spikes,

each crowned with a greenish yellowish triangular sort of cup, deliciously scented. I am acquainted with no flower that excites such enthusiasm among ladies who fancy Messrs. Liberty's style of toilette; sad experience tells me that ten commandments or twenty will not restrain them from appropriating it. *L. cruenta* is almost as tempting. As for *L. leucantha*, an exquisite combination of pale green and snow-white, it ranks with *L. Skinneri alba* as a thing too beautiful for words. This species has not been long introduced, and at the moment it is dear proportionately. But those who know it will be delighted to learn that a large consignment will be put upon the market shortly. There is yet another virtue of the *Lycaste*, which appeals to the expert. It lends itself readily to hybridisation. This most fascinating pursuit attracts few amateurs as yet, and the professionals have little time or inclination for experiments. They naturally prefer to make such crosses as are almost certain to pay. Thus it comes about that the hybridisation of *Lycastes* has been attempted but recently, and none of the seedlings, so far as I can learn, have flowered. They have been obtained, however, in abundance, not only from direct crossing, but also from alliance with *Zygopetalum*, *Anguloa*, and *Maxillaria*.

The genus *Cypripedium*, Lady's Slipper, is perhaps more widely scattered over the globe than any other class of plant; I at least am acquainted with none that approaches it. From China to Peru—nay, beyond, to Torres Straits, from Archangel—but it is wiser to avoid these semi-poetic descriptions. In brief, if we except Africa and the temperate parts of Australia, there is no large tract of country in the world that does not produce *Cypripediums*; and few authorities doubt that a larger acquaintance with those realms will bring them under the rule. We have a species in England, *C. calceolus*, by no means insignificant; it can be purchased from the dealers, but I have not chanced to hear where it is found, and the reader can look up that question as easily as I. America furnishes a variety of species which ought to be hardy, they will bear a frost below zero; but our winter damp is intolerable. Mr. Godseff tells me that he has seen *C. spectabile* growing like any water-weed in the bogs of New Jersey, where it is frozen hard, roots and all, for several months of the year; but very few survive the season in this country, even if protected. Those fine specimens so common at our spring shows are imported in the dry state. From the United States also we get the charming *C. candidum*, *C. parviflorum*,

C. pubescens, and many more less important. Canada and Siberia furnish *C. guttatum*, *C. macranthum*, and others. I saw in Russia, and brought home, a magnificent species, tall and stately, bearing a great golden flower, which is not known 'in the Trade;' but they all rotted gradually. Therefore I do not recommend these temperate varieties, which the inexperienced are apt to think so easy. At the same cost others may be bought, which, coming from the highlands of hot countries, are used to a moderate damp in winter.

Foremost of these, perhaps the oldest of cool orchids in cultivation, is *C. insigne*, from Nepal. Everyone knows its original type, which has grown so common that I remarked a healthy pot at a window-gardening exhibition some years ago in Westminster. One may say that this, the early and familiar form, has no value at present; so many fine varieties have been introduced. A reader may form a notion of the difference when I state that a small plant of exceptional merit sold for thirty guineas a short time ago—it was *C. insigne*, but glorified. This ranks among the fascinations of orchid culture. You may buy a lot of some common kind, imported, at a price representing coppers for each individual, and among them may appear, when they come to bloom, an eccentricity which sells for a hundred pounds or more. The experienced collector has a volume of such legends. There is another side to the question, truly, but it does not personally interest the class which I address. To make a choice among numberless stories of this sort, we may take the instance of *C. Spicerianum*. Mr. Spicer was a tea-planter in Sylhet. He sent to his mother, who had a liking for orchids, some plants of *C. insigne*. The lady grew them on, and brought them to flower, when a certain piece displayed such curious and beautiful characteristics that she asked Mr. Veitch to look at it. He was delighted to pay seventy guineas down and carry off the treasure. *Cypripediums* propagate easily, no more examples came into the market, and for some years this lovely species was a prize for dukes and millionaires. But in the meantime Mr. Sander had sent to explore the whole country side, acre by acre, round the plantation, and at length he succeeded. His collector, Mr. Forsterman, got on the track, but in the very moment of triumph, a tiger barred the way, his coolies bolted, and nothing would persuade them to go further. Mr. Forsterman was no shikari, but he felt himself called upon to uphold the cause of science and the honour of England at this juncture. In great agitation he went for that

feline, and, in short, its skin and its story were conspicuous attractions of his cottage in the after years. Thus it happened that on a certain Thursday a small pot of *C. Spicerianum* was sold, as usual, for sixty guineas at Stevens's; on the Thursday following all the world could buy fine plants at a guinea.

Cypripedium is the favourite orchid of the day. It has every advantage, except—to my perverse mind—brilliancy of colour. None show a whole tone; even the lovely *C. niveum* is not pure white. My views, however, find no backing. At all other points the genus deserves to be a favourite. Its endless variations of form, its astonishing oddities, its wide range of hues, its easy culture, its readiness to hybridise and to ripen seed, the certainty, by comparison, of rearing the proceeds, each of these merits appeals to one or other of orchid growers. Many of the species which come from torrid lands, indeed, are troublesome, but with such we are not concerned. The cool varieties will do well anywhere, provided they receive water enough in summer, and not too little in winter. I do not speak of the American and Siberian classes, which are nearly hopeless for the amateur, nor of the Hong-Kong *Cypripedium purpuratum*, a very puzzling example. It is odd, by the bye, that so few of this pretty plant reach our market. A consignment would pay, assuredly, since small specimens fetch four guineas each at auction, and it would be easily collected, one might suppose. Importers do not think it worth while to send so far for one species, but an enterprising merchant on the spot might ship a few thousands probably without trouble, in such condition that every one would arrive safely.

On the roll of martyrs to orchidology, Mr. Pearce stands high. To him we owe, among many fine things, the hybrid *Begonias* which are becoming such favourites for bedding and other purposes. He discovered the three original types, parents of the innumerable 'garden flowers' now on sale—*Begonia Pearcei*, *B. Veitchii*, and *B. boliviensis*. It was his great luck, and great honour, to find *Masdevallia Veitchii*—so long, so often, so laboriously searched for from that day to this, but never even heard of. To collect another shipment of this glorious orchid, Mr. Pearce sailed for Peru, in the service, I think, of Mr. Bull. Unhappily—for us all as well as for himself—he was detained at Panama. Somewhere in those parts there is a magnificent *Cypripedium* with which we are acquainted only by the dried efflorescence, named *planifolium*. The poor fellow could not resist this temptation. They told him at Panama that no white man had returned from

the spot, but he went on. The Indians brought him back, some days or weeks later, without the prize; and he died on arrival.

My space is nearly exhausted, and the great genus *Oncidium* remains untouched. Perhaps, after all, it is unnecessary to dilate upon a flower so well known. But one learns in writing as in reading. It never crossed my mind before how deeply we are indebted to America for our cool orchids. The *Oncidium* also is a product of the New World exclusively;—thus, of the four classes most useful to amateurs, three belong wholly to America, and the fourth in great part. I had not included *Masdevallia*, because that genus is not so perfectly easy as the rest; but if it be added, nine-tenths, assuredly, of the plants in our cool house come from the West. Among the special merits of the *Oncidium* is its colour. I have heard thoughtless persons complain that they are ‘all yellow;’ which, as a statement of fact, is near enough to the truth, for about three-fourths may be so described roughly. But this dispensation is another proof of Nature’s kindly regard for the interests of our science. A clear, strong, brilliant yellow is the colour that would have been wanting in our cool houses had not the *Oncidium* supplied it. Shades of lemon and buff are frequent among *Odontoglossums*, but, in a rough general way of speaking, they have a white ground. *Masdevallias* give us scarlet and orange and purple; *Lycastes*, green and dull yellow; *Sophronitis*, crimson; *Mesospinidium*, rose, and so forth. Blue must not be looked for. Even counting the new *Utricularia* for an orchid, as most people do, there are, I think, but five species in all the prodigious family that show this colour; and every one of them is very ‘hot.’ Thus it appears that the *Oncidium* fills a gap—and how gloriously! There is no such pure gold in the scheme of the universe as it displays under fifty shapes wondrously varied. Then—*Oncidium macranthum*!—One is continually tempted to exclaim, as one or other glory of the orchid world recurs to mind, that it is the supreme triumph of floral beauty. I have sinned thus, and I know it. Therefore, let the reader seek an opportunity to behold *O. macranthum*, and judge it for himself. But it seems to me that Nature gives us a hint. As though proudly conscious what a marvel it will unfold, this superb flower demands nine months at least to perfect itself, more commonly twelve and above; Dr. Wallace told me of an instance in his collection where eighteen months elapsed from the appearance of the spike until the opening of the first bloom. But it lasts a time proportionate.

This is not the place to treat of culture, but I may add a very

few words that will not be found in the books. There it is laid down that cool orchids must not be exposed to a lower temperature than 45° at night. I imagine that this rule is given to make sure of 'being on the safe side,' because a good number of species, though classed as cool, bear a kind of supplementary label—they must be placed at the warmest end of the house. The amateur who avoids these—and any dealer will tell him which they are—has only to see that the frost does not get in. Such is the result of my personal experience, gained, in a manner, by accident. There is a shelf in my house which goes down almost to freezing. I filled it accordingly with *Oncidium nubigenum*, *Oncidium cucullatum*, and so forth; species which grow at lofty elevations, and love cold. But it chanced that I had some crippled *Odontoglossums* last year, just too good to throw away. Wanting room, I put them out of sight on this shelf. Forthwith they began to recover. Upon making inquiries about the phenomenon, I discovered, of course, that it was a *secret de Polichinelle* among professional growers. Mr. Godseff is not at all concerned if his *Odontoglossum*-house runs down very low into the thirties for weeks at a time, provided—an important point—that the day temperature rise to a minimum of 45° . Therefore, I urge every one who has a light greenhouse from which he can exclude the frost to make an attempt at growing cool orchids. Five pounds will set him up to begin with.

One hint more. Gardeners who have a miscellaneous collection to look after often set themselves against the experiment because orchids suffer terribly from green-fly and other pests, and will not bear 'smoking'—*Odontoglossums* at least. To keep them clean and healthy by washing demands constant labour for which they have no time. This is a very reasonable objection. But though the smoke of tobacco is actual ruination, no plant whatever suffers from the steam thereof. An ingenious Frenchman, whose name I blush to forget, has invented and patented in England lately a machine called the *Thanatophore*, which I confidently recommend. It destroys every insect within reach of its vapour, excepting, curiously enough, scaly-bug, which, however, does not persecute cool orchids much. The machine may be obtained in different sizes through any good ironmonger.

To sum up: these plants ask nothing in return for the measureless enjoyment they give but light, shade from the summer sun, protection from the winter frost, moisture—and brains.

FREDERICK BOYLE.

A March Howl.

THE weather is rude and rough with its shade and stare,
 And great wild clouds do saucily flirt their wings
 I' the face of the yellow sun—then leave it bare.

And the boughs are broke on the trees, and no bird sings;
 And the cattle are blown on the hills, and grass is rare.

There's a wind through the empty house where the ivy clings,
 And the gnawing mice in the wainscot begin to pair;

And the dust is swept into rings,
 And the opening daylight brings
 No joy anywhere.

I am soured and old and grey, and the hunger stings;

I have given the dog his meat, and the cat her share;
 I have nibbled my mouldy crust, while they fed like kings,
 And still they are asking for more and I've none to spare;
 And I've caught the owl in the barn and cut her wings,
 And if worst must come to the worst, still fare is fare,
 And we'll try her with pepper and salt and such-like things;
 She'll last us a week with care,
 If we pick and pickle and pare,
 With no questionings.

I've pawned the last of my goods, and the three-legged chair,

But the broker's a greedy dog and he screws and wrings,
 And he never was known to settle a business fair.

He's a Jew by the hook in his nose and his bargainings,
 He's a Jew by the cut of his coat and his greasy hair,

And the heavy chain to his watch and his golden rings;
 And I'll warrant he'll feather his nest with his ill-got ware,

While the sign of the gold bulls swings,
 And it's baneful shadow flings
 A curse everywhere.

It's cold in the month of March and the early springs,
As I creep to bed like a ghost up the creaky stair,
And I'm taken with chill, and cramp, and the shiverings,
And the rats leap off to their holes with a sudden scare
When I shake the floor with the cough and the quiverings;
And I lie like a hungry beast in a frosty lair,
And the blanket's of little use, for it's worn to strings;
And I've most forgotten my prayer,
But I'll try it to-night, howe'er,
For Heaven's favourings.

There's 'Matthew and Mark and Luke and John,'
With the best of prayers I rank it,
But there's never a 'bed that I lie on,'
And if ever a' angel had brought me one
I'd down on my knees and thank it.
So I stretch on the stone, with a sigh and a groan,
And a 'Providence bless my blanket.'

NINA F. LAYARD.

At Whose Door?

I.

WHEN Friend Townsend's sister married the son of a man who had been known to be a rascal, the whole Townsend connection deplored it with him. Mary was not headstrong, they said, nor restless; she had come of generations of Friends, and that she should marry David Dudley's son was something of which they could not have thought her capable.

True, Henderson Dudley was not much like his father; so far as any one knew he was honest, and inasmuch as he was diligent in business, and unwilling to live upon his wife's fortune, he might be said to serve the Lord; furthermore, he had never cared to look upon that bad side of life in which David Dudley had found his greatest delight. But he was one of the world's people, though he did not make the profession of religion common even among them, and—he was his father's son. This was enough to keep their commiserating sympathy with Oliver fresh in the minds of Mary's relations, even after she had apologised by dying, and though Henderson himself, living only three years afterwards to cherish her little daughter, had meekly gone out of the world in which he had walked very silently and blamelessly, leaving the child as a peace-offering to his brother-in-law.

Little Rachel was not a Townsend, Oliver's dovelike wife used to say; the spark in those fierce dark eyes, dimmed by sudden tears, or dancing in mirth, which 'was not convenient,' confused and perplexed Sarah. And it was inconceivable to her that a child who could so lightly disobey her could feel the love which Rachel sometimes protested. Nor could she reconcile a frankness which was often cruel with an insincerity that was almost untruthfulness, not realising that the latter might spring from a desire to say a pleasant thing or a passionate longing for approval. Each day of Rachel's childhood had been full of contradictions. She would wound her aunt by disrespect, and then fling herself upon the ground to kiss a pebble Sarah's foot had touched; she

would strike a servant, but cry until her great brown eyes were almost blind because she had found a dead bird in the garden.

Perhaps, had Sarah and Oliver had children of their own, they might have given less thought and prayer to little Rachel, and the child, unnoticed, and so unconscious of her own shortcomings, might have grown more gentle, and, coming at last to realise their love, been able to express her own in language they could understand.

'Sometimes, Oliver, I think she has not even natural feeling for us,' Sarah Townsend said, as they sat together in their still parlour one September afternoon. The wide, shining top of the mahogany table was between them, but they were not occupied with books or writing. Friend Townsend was nervously pulling to pieces a blossom which had fallen from the bunch of white-winged sweet-peas in Sarah's bosom, and his wife's hands were folded placidly in her lap.

The shutters in the long French windows were bowed, for at midday it was still warm on the south side of the house, and three thin streaks of sunshine fell across the drab carpet, or touched the brass claws on the feet of the table. There were no vain and unnecessary adornments in the room; two silhouettes in narrow gilt frames hung high above the black wooden mantelpiece, and on a rotund chest of drawers covered with a plain linen cloth, stood a jug, filled with early golden rod; there were shelves on either side of the fireplace, full of books in sober bindings, but there was no warmth of colour in all the bare plain room and no disorder of home life.

Sarah Townsend's sweet face was still young in its serenity, though the hair beneath the delicate fold of her cap was as grey as her silvery gown. Oliver's dark eyes smiled as he looked at her.

'She must love thee,' he said; 'don't thee get discouraged about her, Sarah, or I don't know where the child will end.'

'I cannot be discouraged,' she answered with grave simplicity, 'for she is in the Lord's hands. Yet, if she would but trust us a little more; if she would believe that we desire only her own good! She would know that if she cared for us, Oliver.'

'Does thee think,' he said after a moment's pause, lifting his dark thin face from his breast and wrinkling his forehead restlessly, 'does thee think that we trust her quite enough? If we explained to her why we were unwilling that she should see a play, it would be less wearing to us than her perpetual questioning, and it might—it might be better for her, to have her judgment agree with ours.'

'But is it not best that she should learn the habit of unquestioning obedience?' Sarah asked gently. 'She ought to believe that we know what is wise for her.'

'No doubt thee's right,' Oliver assented quickly, throwing himself back in his chair with a sigh; 'it is not best to give reasons to a child. But, Sarah, suppose, instead of forbidding it, we let her go? She would learn, as I did, how empty all such amusement is—what hunger of the soul it leaves! But to realise that, I sometimes think one must see it for themselves?'

'See it for herself!' Sarah said, clasping and reclasping her delicate hands, her even voice trembling a little; 'why, Oliver, does thee realise what that means? Shall one touch pitch and not be defiled? Thee knows I do not mean to be narrow; many of the world's people do go to plays, and they are pious people according to their light, but we have more light. Shall we let the child do wrong that she may feel the power of sin, when we can restrain her? And oh, Oliver, though thou didst learn to love peace through thy temptations, remember thou art man, and thou wast born a Friend, too; but think of her father and her grandfather! Remember her impulsive, ill-balanced nature; think what the effect might be.'

'Yes, thee's right,' Friend Townsend said, after a pause. 'Thee's always right. But I can't see why she should want to go so much. It isn't as though she had ever gone, and knew the pleasure of it. Is it because young Roger Livingstone asked her? Does she like to be with him, Sarah?'

'I think it is because we do not wish it,' Sarah answered with a sigh, 'and perhaps, because she knows we do not approve of Roger Livingstone. It is nothing deeper.'

II.

THE garden in front of Friend Townsend's great grey house had been touched by frost, though the days were languid with slumberous September heat; the more delicate plants stood with limp, pallid leaves and hanging heads, but salvias blazed inside the box borders and zinnias were in coarse and riotous bloom. There was a scent of decay and dampness in the still air, in spite of the flood of noon sunshine, and now and then a yellow leaf floated down, and through the thinning branches of the tulip-trees came the flash and ripple of the brown river.

Rachel Dudley stood leaning against the old sundial at the

foot of the garden, her chin resting on her hand, and her straight black brows gathered in a sullen frown.

No one could see her from the house, for the laburnum hedge hid that part of the garden, but any one passing the stone gateway might have caught a glimpse of her slender figure through the yellowing leaves of the osage-orange trees which bordered the dusty turnpike. And Roger Livingstone was watching for her as he made his horse walk past the line of Friend Townsend's estate, so he was quick to dismount and throw the bay's bridle over the stone ball on one of the ivy-covered gate-posts, and then hurry down the steps into the damp stillness of the garden.

Roger and Rachel had known each other for many years, but in spite of perpetual quarrelling it had never occurred to Roger to fall in love with her—at least until very lately, and then only because his father had looked at him one day with shrewd good-nature and said: 'Remember, boy, the pretty Quakeress has a fortune of her own.'

That had made Roger think; but, after all, could a fortune give a man happiness, if the girl was first jealous, and then indifferent, and always quick to take offence? Roger thought not; but he liked Rachel, and while he was making up his mind, he was involuntarily and unconsciously more friendly. A young man cannot, even as a remote possibility, contemplate marrying a girl, and avoid, in his most ordinary conversation with her, a betrayal of the attitude of his mind.

Roger found a new pleasure in meeting Rachel, but, feeling vaguely that Friend Townsend did not like him, he had fallen into the habit of seeing her oftener in the old garden than in her uncle's house. The happy interests of more worldly youth he might not offer her, only sympathy for what she chose to consider her loneliness. But he knew that that gave her pleasure, and the half secrecy of their meeting had a charm in it to him which blended with the pleasing excitement of uncertainty. He was eager now to know if this plan of taking her to the theatre on Saturday afternoon could be carried out. 'At least,' he thought, 'they won't say it is improper, as mother would. Thank Heaven, they don't look at things that way!'

'Well,' he said as he reached her side. She looked up a moment at his handsome, boyish face, as he stood striking impatiently at his riding-boots with a switch and waiting for her reply.

'It's no use. They won't let me go,' she said gloomily, not even lifting her chin from her slim brown hand.

He turned sharply on his heel, his spur grinding down into the damp moss of the path. For an instant he was too much disappointed to speak.

'It's outrageous!' he cried; 'it's cruel!'

'They don't care,' Rachel said briefly.

'I'd go, anyhow,' Roger continued with boyish anger; 'why should you give up everything to please people who don't care anything about you, anyway?'

Rachel winced. 'I know they don't,' she said.

'Well, then, make up your mind to go,' Roger ended; 'it isn't as though they had any reason for saying you shouldn't. Of course, in any reasonable thing'—this with the magnanimous indulgence of youth—'I wouldn't advise you to—to disobey them. But this is folly, Rachel. Honestly, I believe I'd go.'

'Of course there isn't any reason,' Rachel cried passionately. 'Why, if they'd give me a good reason I wouldn't say another word. It's only to disappoint me, and make me miserable. They think it makes people good to be disappointed, and they want to make me good; they think I'm so wicked. Oh, I am! I am! but if they would only let me be good in my own way! Or if they thought anything good of me, I could be good. Or if they loved me the least little bit, I wouldn't mind giving up everything in the world for them. Everything! But they don't care whether I'm alive or dead!'

She laid her cheek down on the hot face of the dial and sobbed.

'Don't cry,' Roger said sympathetically; 'what good does it do to cry? Why don't you just go, anyhow? I believe they'd respect you more if you had a will of your own. And it isn't as if they were your own father and mother, you know.'

She shook her head. 'Oh, I can't! Thee knows I can't! And it isn't that I want to go to the theatre so very much, Roger. If they had only said I shouldn't, differently! It's the way they did it. As though I was wicked to want such a thing; a kind of despair about me; and yet, as if, after all, it was only to be expected of me. I might as well live up to it. I might as well be as bad as they think I am!'

Her quick transition from grief to anger dried her tears. Roger did not know what to say; his somewhat slow mind could not keep pace with her sudden changes, and her gusts of feeling wearied him.

He glanced at his horse, cropping the grass about the gate—

post and rubbing his velvety black nose against the reddening ivy leaves.

Rachel noticed his look and feared he was going to leave her. 'I believe thee's right, Roger,' she said. 'I believe I ought to live my life in my own way, to make them respect me. I *will* go!'

Roger looked at her with quick admiration, yet there was a little doubt in his voice as he said: 'It's the only thing to do, Rachel; only—of course—you don't want to make them *very* angry?'

'I don't care how angry they are!' she cried; 'it isn't as if they loved me.'

'Or as if you loved them,' Roger said. 'Only—think it over, Rachel. I don't know—somehow, I don't feel quite sure.'

'I feel sure,' she answered, striking her hands sharply together; 'but oh, I do love them—I do! I do! And they don't want my love!'

Roger tried awkwardly to comfort her, but he felt as though he would rather give up the theatre than have any more tears, and he began to think he had been rash to urge her to go.

But Rachel had decided. There was a bitter joy in making herself as bad as her uncle and aunt thought her.

'They expect me to be disobedient, they are always watching for it, so I'll do it, Roger.'

III.

It was not, however, quite easy to go into town on Saturday.

'Why does thee start so early, Rachel?' Sarah Townsend said, as her niece put on her little drab bonnet immediately after the noon dinner; 'thee will have a long afternoon in town. I wish thee was not such a gad-about. I wish thee loved thy home.'

'Thee will not miss me,' Rachel answered, with the bitterness of premeditated disobedience. She was already beginning to feel remorse, and was blaming her aunt for her suffering. 'If thee thinks I am a gad-about, Aunt Sarah, I don't see how thee can expect me to love my home. I don't see how I can.'

Rachel's fingers trembled as she smoothed the grey ribbons under her chin. But Sarah's quiet sigh, as she said, 'Thee need not try to show me how little thee cares for thy home—I know it too well,' was like wind upon the fire.

Rachel flung back some sharp untruth as she opened the white front door and let herself out into the sunshine. But there was

a sob in her throat, and her eyes were stung with unshed tears which blurred the spray of salvia she stuck in her dress. 'I won't look any more like a Friend than I can help!' she said hotly, knowing how such a thought would wound her aunt. But she did not need the salvia. Her vivid face was not in harmony with her quiet bonnet and gown; she looked like one of the world's people masquerading as a Quakeress.

Roger watched, with a strange fascination, her kindling eyes and her childlike tears and laughter as the play progressed. He even wondered, as they left the glare of the theatre and came out into the soft dusk of the autumn afternoon, whether he was not very much in love with this strange, wild, pitiful creature whose restless, throbbing life beat against the calm of her home.

In his uncertainty, and his pleasure in her pleasure, and the charm of stolen excitement, he was very kind to her, Rachel thought. He could not help telling her, too, how lovely he thought her face was, 'and those little soft rings of hair, Rachel, round your temples, are so pretty!'

Rachel grew scarlet; no one had ever said such a thing to her. She trembled a little and looked at him with such beautiful, appealing eyes, that Roger said more of the same nature. And he added, too, what happiness it was to be near her, and how much he hoped that in the future she would not forget him—('Forget thee? Why, Roger, I've known thee all my life! How could I forget thee?' she said simply)—and that life for him had not much to offer, now; he had *lived*, but it was in the past! He had suffered, too—he would tell her some time if she cared to hear—but she made what joy there was left to him in the ashes of memory, and would she promise always to let him be her friend, no matter what happened?

Upon reflection, afterwards, Roger felt that this had been very unwise; so there were times when he tried to undo his words by being a little less than friendly, and in this Rachel's varying moods helped him. But such wisdom was always followed by a burst of pity for her, and then admiration, and then something strangely like tenderness. Every word he had so rashly said that afternoon had gone deep into her heart, and no momentary change in him could make her forget.

In the excitement of the play Rachel lost sight of everything but its pleasure; her gladness made the whole world seem loving and lovable. She did not remember her grief or her defiance.

'Oh, Roger,' she said, 'it was beautiful! Let us come again.'

'We can come every Saturday afternoon, if you only will,' he answered eagerly, 'and it will be better each time, and Friend Townsend and your aunt will see that it does not do any harm.'

Rachel's face fell. 'I had forgotten them,' she said. And when Roger left her at the sundial, and she hurried through the garden to the big silent house, there was no defiance in her heart. The lamps were not lighted in the hall, only the faint September twilight struggled in through the fanlike window over the front door, but she could see the disapproval on her aunt's face. Sarah Townsend was standing on the lowest step of the wide staircase, waiting to speak to her niece, before going into the dining-room to see that the candles were lighted for tea. She was fresh from her simple toilette-table; in the clear, fine folds of her kerchief were some rose geranium leaves, and the spotless muslin of her cap rested upon the shining smoothness of her grey hair. Her exquisite, fragrant neatness was in sharp contrast to Rachel's flushed face; rebellious curls were blown across the girl's eyes and above the brim of her bonnet; her shawl, too, was awry, and she had torn one glove as she tried to pull it off.

'I hoped,' said Sarah gravely, 'thee would come out by an earlier train.'

'I told thee I was coming at five,' Rachel answered, with the quick thought that perhaps her aunt had missed her. 'If thee had told me that thee wanted me I——' Then she stopped abruptly, realising that she could not have come before. 'Why didst thee not tell me? Thee knows, Aunt Sarah, the only thing in the world I want to do is just to please thee!' Confession was trembling upon Rachel's lips.

'I want thee to want to come, Rachel,' Sarah answered simply, and then with her gentle footfall she went into the dining-room, and standing at the narrow sideboard, with its slender carved legs and inlaid doors and drawers, she began to light the candles in four tall candlesticks. Rachel followed her with that feeling of aggravation which comes when trying to talk to a person who is walking away from one, and the instant resolution to be heard. Sarah had lighted a spill at the blue flames of the apple-wood fire, and was slowly touching the candle-wicks with it. Its delicate glow shone on her serious face. She looked up at Rachel.

'At least thee knows it does not please me to see thee so untidy,' she said.

'Of course thee thinks I wouldn't have come if thee had said thee wanted me,' Rachel cried; 'and I couldn't help the wind blowing.'

'If thee cannot speak respectfully thee can at least be silent,' Sarah answered calmly. Then with her quiet step she again passed the girl and went into the parlour, grieved in her kind, just heart at the antagonism in Rachel's voice. And Rachel, in her small orderly room, had no thought of repentance, but lived over again the excitement of the afternoon, and Roger's kindness in taking her, and the sound of his voice in those new words he spoke.

'I *will* go again!' she said to herself; and she did.

IV.

THE consciousness of deceit could not be entirely escaped even in the height of enjoyment, and the theatre never seemed so pleasant to Rachel again. Indeed, except that it gave her Roger's companionship, upon which she was more and more dependent, she would not have cared to go; yet even that did not persuade her more than two or three times, and afterwards her restless efforts to escape the stings of conscience were very apparent.

Regret began to stain all her interests, and even her few pleasures. She took long walks alone simply for occupation, or hurried into the city and out again for no other purpose than to divert her thoughts, which dwelt continually upon her disobedience.

Sarah Townsend saw the restlessness with dismay, but she could have no conception of its redeeming cause. Yet it was not until one November afternoon that she spoke of it to her husband.

'I have not wanted thee to think less well of the child than thee does, Oliver,' she ended anxiously, 'and so I have not told thee that I was troubled about her. Sometimes I think thy judgments are almost harsh, because thy ideal is so high. But it shows such unrest, this running about so much. She ought to wish to be at home. Home is the Lord's place for a modest young woman; it is an unregenerate mind which demands constant recreation.'

'Yes, yes, that is true,' Friend Townsend answered. He rose, and began to walk nervously about the room. 'It must be stopped,' he said. 'We must remember her heritage from her grandfather and insist upon content. I am glad young Roger Livingstone has gone in town. Sarah! thee does not think she sees him there?'

He paused beside her chair in sudden anxiety.

'Oh, Oliver, no!' she cried. 'How canst thou think of such a thing! It is only the vanity of youth, which seeks any occupation but duty. A woman of thy house could not so forget herself.' With all its gentleness there was a calm pride in Sarah's face as she said this. 'But we must put a stop to the going in town so much, because of that impulsive, inconsequent nature of hers. Will thee speak to her or shall I?'

'Oh, thee! thee!' Oliver said. 'But, Sarah, why didst thee not put a stop to it long ago?'

'Because,' she answered sadly, 'there are so many commands to give. I have to reprove her so often. She does not know how much I dread to find fault, she is so ready to be angry; and it seems to alienate her, to make her more unloving whenever I do admonish her. She cannot see that it is only because I love her that I do it. But thee knows I love her, Oliver.'

The wistful tremor in her even voice gave her husband a shock of pain.

'She has an evil nature,' he said angrily, 'if she can bear to make thee grieve!'

Yet as they sat waiting for Rachel to come home from a long walk in the cold grey afternoon his heart melted towards the child; and when at last she entered the quiet room he rose and left it, though in a silence she thought stern. By himself, in the hall, he struck his hands together with a gesture strangely unlike his usual calm. 'Poor Rachel!' he said; 'poor child!' His head sank upon his breast as he walked restlessly about. Oliver Townsend was remembering many things.

Rachel was in a softened mood when she came into the parlour. In her walk along by the river path she had been thinking that after all life might be very beautiful if there was love in it.

Of late she had been living in her dream of Roger, into which the real man had not entered. She had not noticed his efforts at commonplace friendliness, for they were so genuine, there could be no sting in them. And it needed something sharp to pierce the mist in which her own construction of Roger's looks and words had wrapped her. That afternoon, in the glow of content about her heart she could even be just to her aunt; but all her contrition was subtly pervaded by her joy.

'Rachel,' Sarah said in her low, even voice, glancing at the girl, who stood resting her forehead on the edge of the mantel-

piece, and idly unfastening her bonnet, 'thy uncle and I feel that thy taking such long walks, and going so often into town for no purpose, is but idling away thy time, and we think it best for thee to put a stop to it. We need not discuss it, but just remember what I say.'

Rachel did not speak, and her aunt, thinking it was sullen acquiescence, added, 'It is for thy own good; we are sorry to cross thee.'

The pleading in Sarah's tone touched Rachel; an impulse of love and remorse and happiness sent the tears brimming into her eyes. 'Oh, Aunt Sarah,' she said, 'I won't do anything thee doesn't want me to, but—but—I have, and I am so sorry!'

Sarah Townsend looked up at her with sudden tenderness and hope. 'If thee is really sorry it will be easy for thee to please us, my dear.'

At that unusual, almost unknown word, Rachel's reserve gave way. She flung her bonnet down upon the floor and sank upon her knees beside her aunt, hiding her face in Sarah's lap. Already, in the relief of speaking, she felt herself restored in her own eyes; she did not realise that past wrong-doing is not lessened by confession.

'It isn't just the going in town,' she said, her voice shaken with tears. 'I have done wrong, Aunt Sarah. Oh, I have been so wicked—so wicked! Thee can never, never, *never* forgive me!'

Scenes like this seemed to Sarah Townsend to lack genuineness. It was not necessary to be dramatic. 'Thee must not throw thy bonnet on the floor, Rachel,' she replied calmly, 'and thee must be more composed. Instead of crying, just make up thy mind to be a good girl.'

But Rachel could not check her impetuous remorse. 'I didn't think it was really wrong when I did it. I don't believe I stopped to think at all,' she explained hurriedly; 'but it was all my fault, not Roger's, though he was with me always.'

Sarah put her hands upon the girl's shoulders and lifted her with a sharp push.

'What does thee mean, Rachel?' she said sternly.

At the change in her voice Rachel knelt upright, brushing her hair back from her startled eyes.

'What does thee mean about Roger Livingstone?' Sarah repeated, with something which was almost terror in her tone.

'Oh, Aunt Sarah,' the girl faltered, trying to hide her face on

her aunt's knees again, but held back by the relentless hands, 'I've been going to the theatre with Roger; that's all.'

'All!' Sarah exclaimed, half with relief and half with indignant protest.

'Yes,' Rachel said, covering her face with her hands and sobbing; 'yes; that's what I went in town for three afternoons last month.'

Sarah could not speak; she felt almost faint. She did not see that Rachel had put her heart into her hands for good or ill; only the deceit, the disobedience, the dismay at Roger's influence pressed upon her. She bent her sweet, stern face upon her breast and groaned.

Rachel shivered. 'Oh, I am sorry—I am so sorry. I will be good after this, *always*; I will be good!'

'Perhaps thee cannot be, Rachel,' Sarah said in a broken voice, speaking part of her thought that it might be that the child was not altogether responsible for this warped moral nature, and that her own severity, which had seemed a duty, had but made things worse. 'Thee has deceived us as well as disobeyed us.' She paused, but Rachel did not speak. 'And thee can find pleasure in the companionship of such a man as Roger Livingstone—thee, Oliver's niece!'

Rachel rose, the softness frozen, the tenderness bitter. 'I have deceived thee, but I'm sorry; I've asked thee to forgive me; I'm sorry. I don't see what more I can do.' She had the feeling which sometimes comes with confession, that by confession the sin is atoned for and should be forgotten, and she resented Sarah's grief as unjust and cruel. 'There's nothing wrong in being glad to see Roger,' she continued. 'If he had felt he was welcome here I need not have seen him anywhere else. And—and—I like to be with Roger.'

Sarah looked at her for a moment without speaking, and then she said abruptly, 'Rachel, has Roger asked thee to marry him? I ask thee, though I am not sure that thee will tell the truth.' Sarah was quite calm now, but her mind was confused between distress at this foolish defiance and the far deeper grief of the girl's deceit.

Rachel's lips parted and then closed again; she hung her head in silence.

'Answer me, Rachel;' but Rachel could not speak.

'Does thee mean,' Sarah said incisively, 'that thee cares for a man who does not care for thee? And to be with him thee has

been willing to deceive and disobey thy uncle and aunt?—thee has taken a lie upon thy soul? Rachel, I have known that thee didst not love us and didst not cheerfully obey us, but I never knew that thy heart was filled with deceit, and that thou hadst not the modesty of the young women of thy family. Dost thou think we can ever trust thee again?’

Rachel stood trembling and panting like some wounded animal. She had no thought of self-defence; it was only pain.

‘Thee may go to thy room,’ Sarah said after a long silence; ‘thy uncle and I will try and decide what had best be done.’

Without a word Rachel turned and fled out into the hall and up the stairs. She caught a glimpse of her uncle walking calmly up and down between the tall white lilies in Sarah’s conservatory. He would have to be told! She scarcely seemed to breathe until she reached her own room, and shut and locked the door, and then leaned against it for support. Her heart was pounding in her throat; her eyes were blurred and stinging, but without tears. She heard the parlour door open and close, and knew that Oliver was listening to the story of her guilt.

‘I cannot bear it!’ she said aloud; ‘no, I cannot bear it!’

A gleam of joy came to her in the thought that it could not be borne; it meant escape from intolerable pain, though she could not yet see by what means. Her mind even darted forward to contemplate a time of peace, and she vaguely thought of a day when she should look back upon this misery—but, no, it was too terrible to be looked back upon! Pity for herself made her sob aloud, and without knowing that she was only choosing the lesser anguish she began to say, ‘It is all because they are angry about Roger.’ She could not face the truth, that her pain and theirs was because of her deceit. It was a little easier to say, ‘They are angry that Roger should care for me. By-and-by a means of escaping from pain by action began to grow clear to her. She would go and tell Roger. In her proud, innocent heart Sarah’s assertion that she cared for a man who did not care for her left no sting, save the bitterness that her aunt should have said it.

‘I’ll tell Roger,’ she said over and over again to herself. It seemed to afford her an intangible comfort.

V.

THE warm, fragrant air of the conservatory, and the silent beauty of Sarah’s stately lilies, had made Oliver Townsend much less restless. He almost forgot his anxiety about Rachel, and

when he came into the parlour he was greatly startled and alarmed to find his wife hiding her face in her arms upon the table, her quick breath showing that she was in tears.

‘Tell me, Sarah!’ he said. But it was some moments before she could speak, and then she said, brokenly: ‘Oliver, Rachel has been deceiving us. She has confessed it, though she is not really repentant. Think how we have failed in our duty to her, if such sin is possible in the poor child!’ Then she told him, faltering with grief and shame, of the deception; but with a tender instinct to spare Rachel, she said nothing of what she called the girl’s infatuation for Roger Livingstone. After all, that was the least important. ‘But, Oliver,’ she ended, ‘think how far we have let her drift from us, that she *could* deceive us! Oh, I have sinned in this—it is my fault—not Rachel’s. She does not love us, Oliver, after all these years, but it is because I have been unworthy of the charge of one of His little ones!’

He tried to comfort her and tell her she was wrong, but for once the brave, silent woman was broken; she would not listen, and by-and-by went to her own bedroom, pacing up and down the floor, in despairing condemnation of herself. Her heart ached for Rachel, yet it did not occur to her to go and comfort the child; she would even have felt it wrong to have seemed too readily to excuse the sin; but had she thought of it, it was already too late.

Rachel’s vague purpose of telling Roger had assumed a definite form. There was a train into town that she could take which would make it possible for her to see the young man before he went out for the evening. And she would tell him all about it, and he—he would tell her how to act! She had a confused thought of finding a place to board and some work to do, but underneath this purpose was the wordless conviction that Roger would take care of her. She did not think ‘He will ask me to marry him,’ but she felt it.

At last she rose from crouching against the door, and with trembling little hands put on her dove-coloured bonnet and folded a soft shawl about her shoulders. Then she opened the door and stood for a moment listening, her eyes dilating and her breath coming quickly. There was no sound except the faint snapping of the fire in one of the lower rooms. The hall was quite dark in the early twilight, and the shadows hid her as she crept downstairs; her fingers shook when she turned the big brass knob and opened the front door. In another moment she had closed it stealthily behind her, and stood alone in the grey chill of the November evening.

She looked back once, as she reached the foot of the steps, not hesitating in her purpose, nor with any relenting tenderness, but with the habit of a love which has been repressed and misunderstood. The blinds were not drawn, and she saw Oliver sitting with his grey head bowed upon his hand; his spectacles were folded across the page of an open book upon a little round table at his side, whose shining top gleamed faintly in the flickering firelight. Sarah Townsend's white knitting work lay just as she had put it down when she began to reprove Rachel. The room looked so warm and peaceful, her uncle sat so quietly watching the fire, his face hidden by his hand, a wave of bitterness swept over Rachel. 'What does he care if I am unhappy?' she thought; 'as soon as the lamps are lighted he'll read again.' Oh, if they only had loved her—she already thought of her life with them in the past—she could have been so good! but they would never trust her or love her again! For an instant she forgot that her anger was for Roger's sake.

She turned and ran swiftly through the garden; her dress caught on the broken branch of a rose bush, and she stopped to loosen it, pricking her thin fingers till they bled. She found herself suddenly crying; it was snowing softly, and she was cold, and everything hated her.

The rush and tumult of the flying train drowned her thoughts. She was half dazed when she reached the city, but in the short ride to Roger's rooms she began to think how she should tell him her story. Again and again she reached a certain point in it, and then seemed to wait for his answer: 'What ought I to do, Roger? I'll do whatever thee tells me.'

She was so sure of his sympathy, and so ignorant of human nature, that it was impossible for her to imagine the dismay and almost repulsion with which Roger, entering his small library from his bedroom, saw her standing in his doorway, flushed and panting and almost happy.

After his first two terrible words of astonishment there was absolute silence for a moment. Rachel's colour wavered and ebbed, the terror stole back into her eyes. Without a word of explanation the enormity of her mistake fell upon her.

'Has any one seen you?' Roger said; and then he drew her inside and closed the door. 'For Heaven's sake, why are you here?' His fright at his own responsibility made him angry. Rachel's beautiful dumb eyes entreated him to understand her. 'Something has happened, I suppose. Tell me. Oh, Rachel! you should not have come *here*. Did you go to my office first?'

'They have found out about my going to see the play,' she answered at last, slowly. She had forgotten that it had been her own confession. It seemed to her that she had been trapped into telling her aunt. 'They are very angry, and they will never trust me again. Aunt Sarah said so. So I am going to earn my own living; and I—I thought thee could advise me; but, never mind.'

The pitiful quiver in her voice touched Roger, but it was chivalry, not love, that it aroused.

'Rachel dear,' he said simply, 'I will take care of you, always. You must marry me, Rachel.'

But it was too late. With the first look of horrified surprise on Roger's face the woman had been born in her. She scarcely seemed to hear him, and went on speaking as though he had not interrupted her. She was conscious only of a desire to hide from him that her anger had been for his sake. 'I mean to do some kind of work. I don't know what, yet. But I can't live at Uncle Oliver's any more. So I thought—if thee could tell me some place where I could board—I have a little money—but thee needn't trouble, Roger.'

Roger drew a long breath. After all, it would never do. It was folly to have asked her to marry him; and Rachel had had too much common sense to notice his words.

'Why, of course I'll help you, Rachel,' he said in a troubled way; 'only, honestly, I don't see how I can. Why, Rachel, don't you understand? It wouldn't do.'

'Thee needn't trouble,' she said again, vaguely.

'But it isn't that it is any trouble,' he explained. 'You know I wouldn't care how much trouble it was, only, what would be the use? You couldn't support yourself. Why, my dear girl, what can you do? And, don't you see, Friend Townsend would simply find you, and take you home again. He has the legal right.' Roger was still young enough in his profession to feel its awe. 'Indeed, Rachel,' he continued, for she did not answer, 'it was foolish to come to me—to come in town, I mean; and it was a mistake to think you could take care of yourself. I know the world, my child, and you don't. Do go home, Rachel, right away!'

The old simple friendliness made him very much in earnest.

'Very well,' she said.

'Won't you start to the station at once?' Roger said eagerly. 'Your carriage is at the door still, and you can be at home again in

an hour. I mustn't go downstairs with you; it wouldn't do, don't you know. But if you'll just slip out quietly nobody will see you, and they need never know at Friend Townsend's that you came here.'

'I should know,' Rachel said hoarsely.

'What?' cried Roger impatiently; but without waiting for her answer, 'you can say you came in town on an errand and missed your train, or—or anything! But go! go!'

In the sudden fear that some one might come in and find her there he was again growing angry with her folly.

'Yes, I'll go,' Rachel answered.

'I don't want any one to know that you came here to see me, Rachel dear,' he explained, relenting with honest sympathy for her mistake, 'because, you see, it isn't—well, it isn't usual for a girl to do such a thing. So you won't mind my not going downstairs with you?'

'No, I won't mind,' she said, looking absently about the warm, bright little room; 'I won't mind; oh no. And I'm sorry, Roger; and it isn't thy fault. Only—I ought not to have been born, thee sees. I—I think it isn't anybody's fault, after all.'

'What isn't? What do you mean?' he said with sudden anxiety, for she seemed so indifferent to him and his explanations that Roger felt a thrill of tenderness.

But Rachel had gone. He followed her into the entry, where the one small jet of gas flared and burned blue for a moment in the draft from his open door, but she did not look back. He leaned over the balustrade and saw her grey figure hurrying down the coil of the broad staircase, and he stood there, straining his eyes into the darkness and full of troubled pity, until the front door opened and then closed with a dull, distant jar.

VI.

AND Rachel? The idea of going home again never presented itself to her, yet, with a dim consciousness of a promise, she went blindly towards the station. She forgot the carriage, although it had begun to snow steadily, and in her hurried uncertain walk she stumbled once or twice. The second time a group of men, who had sought shelter in a doorway, laughed loudly, and one of them shouted a name into ears too innocent to know that they were insulted. She turned and looked at them with the wondering thought that any one was happy enough to laugh, and they were silenced.

Again the short, swift ride ; again the glare of the lamp outside the little station, the panting engine, the clouds of steam, and through all the beating snow and the gusts of wind. The station-master did not recognise her, and when he looked again for the one passenger who had left the train she had vanished.

She left the road, running between the leafless hedges, and climbing down a gravelly bank, hurried across a field towards the river. 'If I can just be quiet and think,' she said again and again ; 'if I can only be quiet.'

She walked aimlessly about the wide white meadow, trying to silence the tumult in her brain, which seemed actual noise ; she even put her hands up to her ears once, and stood still, repeating : 'I must think.'

After awhile she tripped upon the twisted root of a locust-tree, and, through sheer exhaustion, did not rise, but sat leaning against its rough trunk. 'I'll think now,' she said to herself ; she hid her face in her hands, for the darkness and the storm began to terrify her. One word, repeating and repeating itself, had made this clamour in her mind.

'Oh, yes, yes,' she assented, 'I *will* die—I must, but how ? Oh, if God would only kill me ! He might be as kind as that. I've always been so unhappy, and it would be such a little thing to let me die. But I've prayed and prayed, and yet I go on living.'

As this thought worked itself out in her mind, she heard, above her own sobs, and above the soft, swift rush of the river, which curved like a brown arm about the meadow, the far-off rumble of a train of cars.

Then, suddenly it all came to her, how easy escape was, how simple ! A great calm settled down upon her. She lifted her face with a bewildered smile ; the snow had caught in the wet tangle of her soft hair, and blew against her small pitiful lips with faint cold touches. Here was the way out of all the pain ; she need not pray for it to come to her, she could take it.

She rose, steadying herself upon her tired feet, and began to walk back across the field towards the railroad. She found herself wondering why anybody was alive when it was so easy not to be. She laughed under her breath to think how she had prayed for escape, when all the while the river had been slipping by, or this other way invited her. What peace to just forget ! They should not say—they should never again have the chance to say, that they did not trust her !—And she should be happy at last. But the

thought of the heaven beyond was perfunctory and unreal. Actually, her purpose was only childish impatience with present pain.

When she reached the steep embankment again she took off her bonnet and folded her shawl about it, with the hardly acquired habit of care for her clothing, and placed them beneath a tree. Then she climbed the gravelly slope and stood upon one of the tracks; the snow beat in her face, and the wind twisted her wet skirt about her ankles. Again, far back among the hills, came the rumble of an approaching train; she felt the jar under her feet, and then, through the white blur of the storm, came the muffled glare of the head light.

In an instant the desire for death was swept away. Her instinct to escape pain had been only love of life in disguise. She leaped back upon the other track. 'Oh, I didn't mean it, I didn't mean it!' she cried hoarsely. The riotous wind swept her frightened voice like a feather into the darkness, and as the cars rushed past her down the track she stood white and trembling, saying again and again: 'I don't want to die, I don't want to die; I didn't mean it!'

She had forgotten—or perhaps she did not know—that the other express was due. The two trains thundered by each other and left only darkness and the beating snow.

Even Death was not kind to Rachel Dudley; the great silence left her still misunderstood.

'She took her own life,' Sarah said briefly. 'The child of our old age could not love us enough to live for us, and it was my fault.'

No one but Roger knew of the interview in his rooms that night. 'I drove her to it,' he said under his breath, divided between grief and fright. Yet this did not last, for he came at last to think very honestly that he had loved her and she had refused him. 'If she had cared for me that night I could have saved her; and now she has broken my heart.'

But through the warp of prejudice Oliver Townsend dimly saw a truth: 'The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children,' he said; 'it was her inheritance.'

MARGARET DELAND.

A Country Day-School Seventy Years Ago.

[Among the unpublished papers of the late Mr. Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S., I find the following pages, recalling, in a very artless manner, the scenes of my father's childhood at school. Slight as they are, and desultory, they give very realistically and vividly a sketch of conditions which are as extinct to-day as the dodo is, and almost as remote; nor am I sure that there exists any similar trivial record of life among the boys of a country day-school at the beginning of the present century. My friend, Mr. Thomas Hardy, has kindly obliged me with one or two notes. The paper was written twenty years ago, when my father's memory, always marvellously accurate, was perfectly unimpaired. I should add that the town described is the seaport of Poole in Dorset.—E. G.]

THE rudiments of book-learning I suppose I acquired from a venerable dame call Ma'am Sly, who taught A B C to babies in the little alley of our Skinner Street, or close to it. Hither I was sent, when about three years old, to be out of harm's way; till, after a short interval, I was promoted to accompany my elder brother W. to the lodgings of Ma'am Drew, another venerable lady who kept a dame's school near the top of Old Orchard. But of this I remember little, save that one afternoon W. objected to go to school without 'a bribe,' for, says he, 'Jemmy Thomson always has a bribe to come.' 'O yes,' replies Mother, 'you shall have a bribe!' and reaches up her hand towards the cane which always hung over the mantelpiece. W. was off like a shot, and never mentioned the subject of 'bribes' again.

As we grew older we were taught in various ways, till in 1817 a Mr. Charles Sells, who had arrived from Portsmouth, opened in Langland Street what immediately became the best day-school in Poole. It was just opposite the entrance of our lane, and W. was his earliest pupil. Before his beginning school-life in earnest, I remember, Father took W. to Portsmouth by Captain Osborn's hoy. After a few days our servant, Sally Cutler, was sent to bring him back by the same vessel. On his return, as I well recollect, he told us that he had seen alongside the vessel lying in Portsmouth

Harbour, a large medusa with four crimson rings on its convexity. We had never seen one of any species in Poole. It was doubtless *Aurelia aurita*.

Towards the end of 1818, when I joined W. at Mr. Sells's, the latter had removed to superior premises at the corner of the Parade, having now collected seventy or eighty scholars. John Hammond Brown—with whom, when we were little tots in frocks, I had begun that fast friendship which, with only one interruption, lasted until his untimely death in adolescence—joined the school at the same time; so that we were not separated—*arcades ambo*. We boys had a nice spacious gravelled playground here; and the situation was in the very best and most open part of the town. Sells was tall in person, very strongly pock-marked; agreeable in manners, well-informed and an efficient schoolmaster. I afterwards entertained a very high respect for him. While we were at Sells's, mother would sometimes, for economy, keep us at home a quarter to carry on our studies in the back garret, by ourselves. We were industrious, and mother was on the keen look-out, and we did not lose much. Here, one day, looking down on Lance's Yard, we saw Mrs. Stickland driving her fat sow along, and scolding. I wrote in pencil on the board-wall of our garret, 'Mrs. Stickland talked to her pig, and think he do understand'—rather a poor sample of my grammatical advancement. This was in the autumn of 1819, I think. I wonder if the inscription still remains legible? I could put my finger on the spot.

The copies which Sells set for us to imitate at home were copper-plate sentences, generally of a preceptive character. In lack of such, in these our self-educating quarters, I was at a loss for a text-hand copy. But seeing in Jane Taylor's 'Nimble Dick' the line—

And be not over quick,

I eagerly adopted this, simply because it was of suitable length, and began with the word 'Be.' When I went back to school I recollect Mr. Sells looking over my copy-book, and good-humouredly rallying me on my choice of a precept.

Soon after my first appearance at the school, the boys being assembled in the playground before class-time, a bigger boy, Tom Tucker, for some grievance which I cannot recall, struck me with both his fists together in front and behind, and 'hit the wind out of me;' that is to say, by the blow the lungs were forcibly

emptied of air to a much greater degree than by ordinary expiration, so that the muscular action of the diaphragm could not immediately refill them. I crumpled down on my heels, voiceless, with open mouth, gasping for breath, and frightened as well as hurt: amid the laughter of the boys, to whom I presented a curious spectacle, while, as I did not cry, they concluded I was not hurt. W. led me home as soon as I could walk, and I was not at school that afternoon. The explanation of my absence caused Tucker to come to grief. In going to and from school with W. my general mode was with a singular sort of skipping-dancing progress, side foremost, along the curb-stone of the rough Poole pavements. But later on, when we were older, John Brown and I generally walked to school together with the arm of one round the other's neck. But to this we always made one exception. In some places in the street—as for instance, in High Street, near Chapel Lane, there were stone posts along the edge of the pavement; each of these we would invariably clear, one behind the other, leap-frog fashion.

At the close of every half-year we had each a book provided for specimens of our writing; or rather the specimens were written on separate sheets of like size, and these were then bound up into a book by the stationer. The writing of those copies was an affair of very high importance and awe, and extraordinary care was taken. A single sentence on a page was sufficient, and there would be one in text, round, and small hand, and one or two in fancy hands, I think, for those boys who could achieve such. W. wrote a beautiful hand; my own was very cramped and ugly. I recollect that the following was the small-hand sentence for one half-year:

If the spring put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit; so, if youth be trifled away without improvement, manhood will be rendered despicable, and old age miserable.

At the end of the half, too, there were exercises in arithmetic, thus:—A number of us sat, each with slate and pencil, opposite Mr. Sells. He would give out a sum, and then allow us a certain time by his watch. When the allotted minutes were elapsed he cried 'Stop!' and all who had the answer correct received a mark of approval. Some of these would be catch sums, of the class of 'What is the difference between six dozen dozen and half a dozen dozen?' We employed Bonnycastle's Arithmetic as a text-book,

and I used to find great entertainment in the series of simple catch-problems at the end.

John Brown and I, sitting side by side immediately below and in front of Mr. Sells, were accustomed to amuse ourselves by drawing on our slates scenes supposed to represent Africa or India. Whichever country was intended, however, the mode of treatment in the design was invariable. A tiger (or a lion, for this amount of variation was admitted) pursued an antelope across a plain in the centre of the slate, and facing the beholder. In the distance rose a range of mountain peaks, drawn according to the approved map-fashion of the day. One of these was perforated with a cavern, from which a sympathetic tiger peeped out upon the contest. Palm trees were scattered about of course; and in the foreground ran a rivulet, broken by a cascade, with a brace of swans reposing on the glassy stream. This subject was sketched in, rubbed out, sketched again to-morrow, again obliterated by sponge or jacket-sleeve, to be again renewed *ad infinitum*.

Most of the pupils at Sells's were what was called 'respectable'; a few, however, were somewhat humble in position. We certainly took our place in the former category. Mother took care that we were always neat and clean. I remember, indeed, wearing corduroy trousers, and at another later period a mole-skin jacket; but many boys of fair status wore these materials, although I cannot say I ever exactly liked doing so. Both W. and I had a name for decent behaviour in the streets. There were one or two poor simple women, who either got their living in the streets or were a good deal there, and were teased and taunted and nick-named by the idler boys. Poor Betty, the cake-woman, a harmless but much-abused creature, was one day surrounded by her tormentors, when W. and I passed along the pavement. Betty saw us, and began to say, 'There's two young gentlemen! why don't you behave like them? Ye never hear them calling after a poor creature!' And mother used to hear our demeanour praised from unexpected sources, much to her complacency.

Yet we could not altogether avoid hot water. Feuds with other boys would arise, and these would remain some time unsettled, a threatened 'hiding' hanging over our heads. It was a common thing, on turning a corner of a street, to say, pointing to a distance, 'There's a boy that owes me a hiding!' when perhaps he, catching sight of me, would savagely shake his fist, and then, seeing me protected by the company of an ally, turn

up some lane. But if alone, under like circumstances, I would have to run for it. This imminence of danger from foes made us habitually cautious and wide awake in turning corners. We played games in the streets as well as in the playground. The thoroughfares of Poole were not so crowded with passengers as to make this practice any public nuisance. Scourge-tops, peg-tops, and humming-tops were all patronised, the last-named, however, chiefly within doors. Marbles, of course, upon the pavement; of these we used chiefly three sorts. The most highly prized were the alleys of veined white marble, highly polished, the purest having often pink veins. Those of a yellow sort were called soap-alleys. Others, made of a compact blue or grey limestone, went by the name of 'stoners.' There was also an inferior sort, rudely moulded out of red and white clay, and baked, which were named 'clayers.'

A game called 'long-galls'¹ was a favourite with Sells's boys, but I never heard of it elsewhere than in Poole. I never cared for it; it was something like prisoner's base. Another, named 'ducks off,'² consisted in setting on a large flat stone a round stone as big as one's fist, which from a certain distance one strove to knock off by bowling at it a stone of similar size. Two boys or more did this in turn, with certain conditions and results determined by rules. Birds'-nesting, egg-stringing, squailing at birds, flinging stones at anything or nothing, throwing a flat stone across water to produce 'ducks and drakes,' these, of course, were common. We used the term 'jellick,' no doubt a corruption of 'jerk,' to denote a mode of projecting a stone as the arm came suddenly against the ribs, or by a more fantastic trick still, against the thigh of the lifted right leg. Saturday afternoon was our only holiday, and in summer bathing in the sea was in vogue on these occasions. We never used the word 'bathe,' however, but invariably 'get into water;' and this strange periphrase never seemed strange to me until after I left Poole. A party of us would 'get into water' at Powderhouse, or over at Ham, or round by Windmill. This last is a little peninsular projection of the shore at West Butts, just in front of what at that time was Salter and Balston's rope-walk. I believe there was a tradition of a windmill having once stood on its gravelly extremity, but no traces of such an edifice existed in my day. One of the permanent channels of the

¹ Query 'goals.'—E. G.

² Still played, Mr. Thomas Hardy tells me, as 'cobbs off,' in the interior of the county.—E. G.

muddy harbour, or rather of the backwater known as Hole's Bay, ran close by this spit of land, and was about waist-deep for us at ordinary tide, so that it was the spot most chosen for bathing by the bolder boys, who had learned or were learning to swim. Powderhouse suited those little coward urchins whose ambition reached not beyond knee-deep. I recollect very well 'getting into water' at Windmill with W. and some other boys before I had learned to dip my head. One of the bigger ones, with W.'s approbation, W. having in vain exhorted me to dip, took forcible hold of me and ducked me several times, a process which doubtless did me good. We never, in our whole school course, once played truant, but other boys did, and the process was freely talked of among us. We called it 'miching,' pronouncing the *i* in 'mich' long, as in 'mile,' whereas in Devonshire the same word, in the same sense, is pronounced with the *i* short, as in 'mill,' thus making the word rhyme with 'rich,' a pronunciation unknown to us Poole boys.

The 29th of May, Oak-apple Day, was called Shicsack Day,¹ when all loyal urchins were expected to display a bit of oak in their hats or caps. A mere twig of oak leaves was sufficient, but if an oak-apple was attached it was better, while those who wished to be altogether 'the cheese' wore leaves or apples on which a fragment of gold leaf was gummed. There was a considerable demand for gold leaf just before the day at the stationers' shops, and for boys whose 'tin' was scarce there was an inferior kind of foil provided called Dutch gold, while in the little hucksters' shops bits of oak duly gilt could be obtained 'for a consideration.'

Rude doggerel rhymes were repeated on occasions among the boys, and learned from one to another. Thus a boy would come suddenly behind another, and seizing him by the shoulders, proceed to dig his knee into the posteriors of the other, at every line of the following :

I owed your mother
A pound of butter ;
I paid her once,
I paid her twice,
I paid her three times over ;

the last line accompanying a kick of double vehemence.

In games in which one lad was set in antagonism to the rest, or had to be 'he,' as it was termed, such as the game of Touch,

¹ Mr. Hardy says : 'It is still called "Sic-sac day" by the peasantry ; I have no notion what the words mean.'

the individual was determined by all standing in a circle, while one within repeated the following nonsense, touching a boy in succession at every word, and so going round and round the circle, when the one on whom the last word fell was 'he.' There used to be what might be called a *lectio varia* in the second line, as I indicate.

One-ry, oo-ry, ick-ry, an ;
 Bipsy, bopsy, { Solomon san ;
 { Little Sir Jan ;
 Queery, quaury,
 Virgin Mary,
 Nick, tick, tolonon tick,
 O, U, T, out ;
 Rotten, totten, dish-clout,
 Out jumps—He.

The word FINIS at the end of books was turned into the following poetic flight :

F for Finis,
 I for inis,
 N for nuckley-bone,
 I for Johnny Waterman
 S for Samuel Stone.

The next, I suspect, the boys learned from their little sisters, since the imagery is of a decidedly feminine cast :

My needle and thread
 Spells Nebuchadned ;
 My bodkin and scissors
 Spells Nebuchadnezzar ;
 One pair of stockings and two pair of shoes
 Spells Nebuchadnezzar the king of the Jews.

One boy meeting another would address him with these queries ; the other giving the replies :

'Doctor ! Doctor ! how's your wife ?'
 'Very bad, upon my life.'
 'Can she eat a bit of pie ?'
 'Yes, she can, as well as I.'

Having gathered a tuft of the shepherd's purse (*Thlaspi bursa-pastoris*), so abundant by waysides, a boy would invite his unsuspecting fellow to pull off one of the triangular capsules. Then he would immediately cry :

Pick-pocket, penny nail ;
 Throw the rogue into gaol !

suiting the action to the word by catching him hold, and dragging him off.

Whenever a crow (or rook) was seen, it was considered a kind of sacred duty incumbent on us, to shout :

Crow ! crow ! get out o' my sight ;
Or else I'll have your liver and light !

And it was scrupulously inculcated, that how distant soever the bird might be, it would immediately obey ; and this in the face of a thousand experiences to the contrary.

In the gravel formations around Poole, perforated pebbles are not uncommon, and the occurrence of one of these was considered 'lucky ;' such a stone being denominated a 'lucky stone.' But in order to realise to the full the felicitous results of such a find, it was important to go through the following ceremony. The stone was picked up, spat upon, and then thrown backward over the head of the fortunate finder, who accompanied the action with the following rhyme :

Lucky stone ! lucky stone ! go over my head,
And bring me some good luck before I go to bed.

There are certain tricks that can be practised on the same person only once. Of this kind were two insidious *ruses*, always held in reserve for a fresh boy. One of the initiated would attack the new-comer with an invitation to play at a pretty game, saying,

'Now I'll begin. I one my mother.'

The other is to reply,

'I two my mother.'

And they run the cardinals in alternation till the unsuspecting urchin comes to,

'I eight my mother.'

Immediately the artful tempter shouts,

'Here's a wicked footer ! He says he hates his mother !'

Or the device would be varied thus : the dialogue would run down the alphabet, beginning—

'I'll go to A.'

'I'll go to B.'

till the stranger comes in due course to—

'I'll go to L.'

when, as before, a cry of affected surprise is raised—

'Lo ! what d'ye think ? he says he'll go to hell !'

In both cases the trifling difference of the absence of the aspirate being of no moment.

While I was at Sells's school I was troubled with large warts on my fingers. One of these under my thumb-nail, I saturated frequently with ink, as advised by a schoolfellow, and at length it came away bodily, leaving a cavity lined with healthy skin, which soon filled up, and left no trace of the wart. Another I *charmed* away. I was told to rub the wart with a bit of cheese, which was then to be buried secretly, and was assured that as the cheese decayed so would the wart. I followed the directions implicitly, and the wart did disappear, totally, within a few days, with no further process; but how much of the result was owing to the magic I will not dare to say. *Post* is not always *propter*.

It was soon after I joined Mr. Sells's school that I learned to whistle. I distinctly recollect the very spot where I was when I first succeeded. I had often before this, as I walked with W., shaped my mouth when he whistled in the street, in order that I might dishonestly share in the reputation of the coveted accomplishment; but one afternoon, as I was going to school alone, just as I came in front of the row in Perry Garden, beyond Globe Lane, I succeeded, to my delight, in whistling the tune to which

Jesus, lover of my soul!

was ordinarily sung at Meeting. With great delight and pride did I achieve this feat.

My recollections of my schoolfellows are naturally confined principally to those in whose conduct or appearance there was some marked peculiarity. As a rule the boys at Mr. Sells's were all on one level, but there were two little fellows, Charley and Tom D—, the grandsons of a wealthy lady, who were in a manner privileged, and therefore disliked by the rest of us. Charley was a self-conscious, priggish urchin, a very fussy little fellow. On entering the schoolroom in the morning, instead of the quiet bow, he would bustle in with 'Good morning, Mr. Sells!' He one day volunteered to blab on John Brown and me, but confounding our names in his excitement he shouted, 'John Gosse and Philip Braown, sir, talking!'

At the window farthest from the master's desk sat Fred Fox, son of a dyer in New Street, a tall and silent lad, who used to come to school with his hands deeply empurpled with home-work at the dyeing vat, and who would hide his hands under the desk to avoid our observing them. A poor little starveling named George G—, stepson of Bob Randall, the cabinet-maker in Market Place, greatly excited our sympathy and compassion, for though he was a gentle, timid little fellow, we all knew that his

stepfather was addicted to the bottle, and that his mother cruelly beat and starved him.

There were three stout lads, the sturdy sons of a stalwart French emigrant, who lived at a pleasant cottage at the end of the Parade. They and their father were always dressed in hoddengrey. These boys were among our private friends. Not so the four brothers H——, William, Henry, Haviland, and Peter, the sons of a sort of rustic squire or gentleman-farmer, who owned an estate on the Wimborne road, just where it leaves the head of Holes' Bay. These lads were very boorish, Harry especially, whose forehead was 'villainously low.' One day when Haviland and Peter were standing side by side in class, the former found himself somewhat crowded, and turning sharply to his young brother said, 'What d'ye funch I for? Peter, sir, a-funchin'!' There was a lad named George Harris, whose father owned a stoneyard in High Street, in front of the Wesleyan Chapel. George was a big-built, heavy, hulking lad, rather dull in intellect, if not indeed half-witted. Yet had he managed to learn the Multiplication Table, which he repeated *suo more*. Every item he invariably introduced with the conjunction disjunctive:

'But 7 times 9 is 63;

'But 7 times 10 is 70;

'But 7 times 11 is 77;' with a strong emphasis on the 'But,' and a ducking of his head and a blinking of both eyes at each statement. Poor simple harmless George was rather a favourite amongst us boys. One day much later he and another youth took a small skiff and sailed to Studland Bay; a squall capsized it and they both were drowned.

Jerry, Charley, and Tom H—— were queer fishes. Each of these brothers had a gait of his own—three varieties of elegance. Jerry leaned forward as he walked, so that you expected to see him at every moment come down upon his face; Charley hung behind, so that he looked as though he were going to sit down at every step; while Tom cherished the graceful habit of striking the fellow-ankle with each foot as he lifted it, slavering his lips with his protruded tongue as he walked withal. The idea of correcting these peculiarities never occurred, I think, to Mr. Sells or to the lad's parents. A rather poor boy named Bill Jewell, whose parents kept a little huckster's shop in Towngate Street, just opposite the burial-ground gate, one day let fall his slate from his hand. Poor Bill looked towards Mr. Sells, and said in an apologetic tone, 'It tumbled down.' This gave Mr. Sells occasion

to explain the difference between 'tumble' and 'fall,' illustrating the use of each by examples. What the effect was on Bill Jewell I know not, but the little casual lecture sank deep into *my* brain, and was never obliterated. This was a sample of Sells's interesting manner of instruction.

I find I can recall as many as fifty of Sells's boys with more or less distinctness. I shall mention in particular but one more, an Irish boy named Dan Duggan, from Portsmouth. This lad was a square-set, active, broad-visaged chap, with a great fund of animal spirits, and that readiness of repartee and fondness for broad buffoonery which characterise Irish boys generally. He comes up before my memory most vividly, however, as the subject of a terrible thrashing which he suffered from Sells. He had several times got into trouble for his idleness and mischief and aversion to learning. For this he took it into his head to run away, he being a boarder. Mr. Sells missed him suddenly one day, and having some suspicion of his hopeful pupil, he went straight on board one of Manlaw's hoys, then at the quay, on the very point of sailing for Portsmouth, where he found the truant coiled away among the sails in the hold. Dan was dragged back to school, when a solemn arraignment was made, judgment pronounced, and punishment executed forthwith, before us all. He was horsed on another boy's back, and received a wholesome caning, during which he squealed uproariously. The moment he was down, however, the very instant, as Sells had turned to walk back to his desk, my young gentleman, squatting on his heels, began his grimaces, moping and mowing, and lolling out his tongue at his master. Whether from some expression on the wondering boys' faces, or from some other cause, Sells suddenly turned round, caught the unrepentant urchin *flagrante delicto*, hoisted him a second time, put his head into a green satchel, and administered to the still tingling frame a caning which left no room for buffoonery this time. Then, bag still on head, Dan was thrust up a staircase which opened from the schoolroom, and of him we saw no more.

We told this story at our homes with a great deal of sympathy and compassion for Dan. We talked of it day after day; we narrated it to female relatives, and elicited from them expressions of pity. It was even proposed and discussed among us that we should write a placard—

WHO BEAT THE POOR BOY?

and, going by night to the Parade, should paste it on the shutters

of Sells's school, thinking to crush him with the verdict of public opinion. But whether this was felt to be too terrible an infliction, or whether we dared not to resort to it, it never went beyond discussion. It should be said that it was not the whipping, which was ordinary enough, but the muffling of the culprit with the green cap of execution that mainly moved our boyish indignation, though the young rogue richly deserved what he got; and even this, after what had occurred before, was no more than a just retribution. Pedagogue and pupil must have healed their breaches, for I heard of their meeting again many years later, and drinking a bottle of wine together.

Of the primitive Dorset dialect, such as I have since seen it written down in the poems of Mr. Barnes, I recollect many examples at Sells's. Among the oddities of pronunciation which prevailed among the less cultivated of the boys, there were two which doubtless were lingering remnants of the old Anglo-Saxon. The rural and more vulgar Poole boys used the word 'thik' for the pronoun 'this,' the 'th' being sounded hard in each case. The other word was 'ich' (with the *i* long as in 'ice'); this was heard mainly in the form 'ichy,' and always in a sort of simulated humbleness in begging, as when one lad, seeing another eating an apple or a cake, would hold out his hand, saying, 'Gi' ichy a bit!' 'What, none for poor ichy!' But when Abbotsbury people came to Poole they amused us with a further peculiarity, for among them 'ich' was the word commonly used for the personal pronoun 'I.' And we used to repeat, as traditionally recited in a rapid and laughably unintelligible way, the following reply of an Abbotsbury lad to the question, 'What had you for dinner?' 'Br'd and cheese ich had; what ich had ich ate; ich 'd ate more if ich 'd had 't.' This, rolled off the tongue with all possible haste and with every 'i' elided, made a most extraordinary utterance. The interesting point is the preservation of the Teutonic form 'Ich.'¹

Sells occasionally took his boys, though almost all of us were but day-scholars, for a long walk. On one occasion we went to Wimborne, six miles there and six miles back; but at Plainfield, on the way, we borrowed a donkey, which gave some relief as well

¹ Mr. Thomas Hardy writes to me: 'This and kindred words, e.g. "Ich woll," "er woll," "er war" (I will, he will, he was), &c., are still used by old people in north-west Dorset and Somerset. (Vide Grammer Oliver's conversation in *The Woodlanders*, which is an attempted reproduction.) I heard "Ich" only last Sunday, but it is dying rapidly. I know nobody now under seventy who speaks so, and those above it use the form only in their impulsive moments.' It does not appear to occur in Mr. Barnes's *Vale of Blackmore* dialect-poems.—E. G.

as aided the fun. The donkey had to carry six of us at a time; the hindermost one would enjoy rather a precarious seat, certainly; but this did not matter, and the mirth was uproarious. Another time he took us along the Wareham road, but possibly not to Wareham itself, which was ten miles off; yet we returned after dark, for I recollect that on the way home Mr. Sells surprised us by suddenly calling out, 'I see the American moon!' thus bringing home to us the fact that the orb which we saw was shining at that moment upon America also.

During the time I speak of, Sells's was certainly the principal day-school in Poole; but Mr. John Hosier, who kept a school of somewhat lower grade in Cinnamon Lane, enjoyed considerable local reputation for his teaching of writing, ciphering, and navigation. Hosier was an old man who had knocked about the world a good deal in a rough way; had been a sailor, had filled some maritime situation in the port of Bonavista in Newfoundland, and in many ways had acquired the sympathies of a marine population. He was a Wesleyan, and used to tell his boys how he had lain across a table all night on one occasion, weeping in agony on account of his sins. He was notwithstanding a cheery, well-meaning old fellow, fond of merriment, and easily induced in the middle of school-time to produce a repertory of stale jokes. His wife, a gaunt masculine woman, used to call in a piercing shout up the schoolroom stairs, 'Hosier!' 'What, my dear?' 'What's a clock?' 'A pretty round thing up a-top o' Market-house.' Hosier used to jest with his castigations. When he had applied the ferula, he used to say to the criminal, referring to his smarting hand, 'Put that in your pocket against Poole Fair!' and he would sometimes make his boys say, on pain of a second edition, 'Thank ye, sir, for the good you've done me!' As we used to pass Hosier's window coming from Sells's, we lingered to admire the specimens of penmanship which were exhibited in it; and particularly a sheet containing two winged babes, done in 'flourish,' with a sailor beneath, and the inscription, for the grammar of which Dibdin was scarcely responsible:

These are sweet little cherubs what sits up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack.

But in 1823 I was sent off to more serious schooling at Blandford, and both Sells and Hosier passed out of my experience.

P. H. GOSSE,

Lady Car: the Sequel of a Life.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER I.

LADY CAROLINE BEAUFORT was supposed to be, as life goes, an unusually fortunate woman. It is true that things had not always gone well with her. In her youth she had been married almost by force—as near it as anything ever is in an age when parental tyranny is of course an anachronism—to a man unlike herself in every way—an uncultured, almost uncivilised, rich boor of the neighbourhood, the descendant of a navvy who had become a millionaire, and who inherited all the characteristics of his race along with their money, although he had never known anything of navvydom, but had been born a Scotch country gentleman with a great estate. It is to be supposed that her father and mother believed it to be for her real good when they placed poor Car, fainting with fright and horror, in the arms of a man whose manners made even them wince, though they were forced into no such constant contact with him, for they were far from being wicked parents or bad people in any way. There is nothing in the world so difficult to understand as the motives which lead fathers and mothers to such acts, not so common as they used to be, yet not so rare as they ought to be. They think, perhaps, that a little aversion at first tells for next to nothing in the long run, and that an affectionate, gentle creature, submissive to law and custom, will end by loving any man who belongs to her, or having at least some sort of sentiment which will answer for love; and that, on the other hand, no fantastic passion of youth is to be trusted to surmount all the risks of life in the lottery of marriage, which affords so many changed points of view; whereas wealth is a solid and unchangeable good which outlives every sentiment. These, I suppose, were the conclusions of Lord

and Lady Lindons when they married their daughter to Mr. Thomas Tonance—or, rather, these were the conclusions of the Earl, in which his wife concurred very doubtfully, and with much reluctance, rather failing in courage to support her child in any effort for liberty than helping to coerce her. If Lord Lindons was determined as to the value of wealth, Lady Lindons was one of those women who have come to the silent conclusion that nothing is of any great value, and that life has no prizes at all. What does it matter? she was in the habit of saying to herself. She did not believe in happiness—a little less comfort or a little more was scarcely worth struggling for; and no doubt, as Lord Lindons said, wealth was one of the few really solid and reliable things in the world, a thing with which many minor goods could be purchased—relief to the poor, which was always a subject of satisfaction, and other alleviations of life. Lady Car was sacrificed to these tenets. But Providence had been good to her: and while she was still young her husband had died. If he did not justify Lord Lindons' expectations in his life he did in his death. For he left everything in his wife's hands; not only had she the excellent jointure which her settlements secured her—a jointure without any mean and petty clause about marrying again—but everything was left in her hands—the control of the property during little Tom's minority, and almost every advantage which a queen-mother could have. Tom was a little fellow of six, so that a long period of supremacy was in Carry's hands, and the rough fellow whom she had almost hated, from whom her very soul had shrunk with a loathing indescribable, had done her the fullest justice. It is doubtful whether Lady Car was at all touched by these evidences of devotion on the part of a man who had bullied and oppressed her for years. But she was startled into violent and passionate compunction, extraordinary in so gentle a person, by the still wilder and more impassioned joy which swept over her soul when she heard of his sudden death. Poor Lady Car had not been able to resist that flood of exultation which took possession of her against her will. What did she want with his money? He was dead and she was free. It filled her with a guilty, boundless delight, and then with compunction beyond expression, as she tried to return from that wild joy and took herself to task.

And then, after a very short interval, she had married again; she had married what in the earlier years of the century people called the man of the heart—the lover of old days who

had been dropped, who had been ignored when Lord Lindons came to his title and the prospects of the family had changed. How much Lady Caroline knew or did not know of the developments through which Mr. Beaufort had passed in the meantime no one ever discovered. She found him much as he had been when her family had dropped him, only not so young. A man who had made no way, a man without reproach, yet without success, who had kept stationary all the time, and was still a man of promise when his contemporaries had attained all that they were likely to attain. Beaufort was poor, but Lady Car was now rich. There was not the least reason why they should not marry unless he had been fantastic and refused to do so on account of her superior wealth. But he had no such idiotic idea. So that Lady Car was considered by most people, especially those who had a turn for the sentimental, as a very lucky woman. There had been the Tonance episode when she had not been happy, and which had left her the mother of two children, destined, perhaps, some time or other, to give her trouble. But they were children amply provided for, and she had an excellent jointure and had been able to marry at thirty the man of her heart. She was a very lucky woman, more fortunate than most—far more fortunate than three parts of those women who make, compulsorily or otherwise, ill-assorted marriages to begin with. In very few cases indeed does the undesirable husband die, leaving his wife so much money as that, unburdened by any condition as to marrying again; and very seldom indeed does the woman so happily left pick up again in the nick of time her first love, and find him unchanged. It was quite a romantic story, and pleased people: for, however worldly minded we may be, we all like to hear of a fortunate chance like this, and that all is well that ends well, and that the hero and heroine live happy ever after, which was the conclusion in this case.

The first part of Lady Car's history has been written before: but probably the reader remembers nothing of it, and no one would blame him; for it is an old story, and a great many episodes of that human history which we call fiction have been presented to his attention since then. She was tall, of a pliant, willowy figure, soft grey eyes, and an abundance of very soft light-brown hair. Her complexion was pale but clear, and her nose a trifle, the merest trifle, longer than the majority of noses. This conduced greatly (though I don't deny that it was a defect) to the general impression made by Lady Caroline, who was what

is called aristocratic in appearance from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot. It was the grand distinction, an air such as some of the humblest-minded and most simple of women often have of that ethereal superiority of race which we all believe in. As a matter of fact, her brother, Lord Rintoul, had a great deal less distinction in his appearance than many a poor clerk. But Lady Car might have been a princess in her own right, and so, to be sure, she was. Unfortunately, I am obliged to describe her to begin with, since it is impossible to bring her forward in her own person until I have told a little of her story. She was amazingly, passionately happy in her second marriage—at first. If she saw any drawbacks she closed her eyes to them, as passionately determined to admit nothing that went against her bliss—but perhaps she did not see anything. And, after all, there was not much to see. Mr. Beaufort was a gentleman. He was a man of great cultivation of mind, an excellent scholar, understanding every literary allusion that could be made, never at a loss for a happy phrase or quotation, quite an exceptional man in the way of culture and accomplishment. He was extremely good-looking, his manners were admirable, his character without reproach. Nothing seemed wanting in him that a woman could desire. And, notwithstanding the uncomfortable episode of her first marriage, and the two black-browed children, who had not a feature of their mother's, he was Lady Car's only love, and, so far as anybody knows, or as was ever known, she was his. By how many devious ways a pair may be led who are destined to meet at last! He in various wanderings over the world; she, in the blank of her dreadful life, through all her martyrdoms, had all the time been tending to this. And now they were happy at last.

'No,' she said, 'Edward; don't let us settle down; I can't: a house would not contain me. I want the grand air, as the French say. I should be making horrible comparisons, I should be thinking'—she stopped with a shiver—'of the past. Let us go abroad. I have not been abroad since we were parted; it will look like taking up the story where it dropped.'

Beaufort gave a half-conscious glance towards the spot outside where the black-browed children were playing. He felt, perhaps, that it would not be so easy to take up the story where it had dropped; but he assented, with quiet gentleness soothing her. 'I am always fond of wandering. I have done little else all my life—and with you!'

'Yes, with you!' she repeated. She was accustomed to the

children, and did not think of the anachronism of their presence at the moment of taking up the story. 'You shall take me to all the new places where you have been alone, and we'll go to the old places where we were that summer together; we'll go everywhere and see everything, and then when all the novelty is exhausted we shall come back and make a home of our own. And then, Edward, you shall be left free for your work. How we used to talk of it *that* summer! You have not done much to it yet?'

'Nothing at all,' he said, with something like a blush.

'So much the better,' cried Lady Car. 'I should have been jealous had you done it without me—you could not do it without me. You shall not touch a pen while we are away, but observe everything, and investigate mankind in all aspects, and then we'll come home—and then, Edward, what care I shall take that you are not disturbed—how shall I watch and keep off every care! You shall have no trouble about anything, no noises or foolish interruption, no one to disturb you but me. And I will be no interruption.'

'Never, my love,' he said fervently; but this was the only thing to which he responded clearly. He had not, perhaps, the same intentions about that great work as once he had. He did not see it in the same light; but it gave him a certain pleasure to see her enthusiasm. It surprised him, indeed, that she could be capable of that enthusiasm just as if the story had never dropped. Women, sweet souls! are so strange. There had been nothing in his life so definite as the Tonance marriage and the black-browed children; but yet she was capable of taking up the dropped story just where it had been thrown aside. So far as love went he felt himself capable of that too, but then he had not dropped the love when the story was dropped. Whereas she— In all these records there was something to be got over with a faint uneasiness, to be ignored if possible. He could not return with the same unity of mind as she displayed to the half-forgotten things of the past. But he was sure that her presence would never be any interruption, and he was pleased to fall into her eager, delightful plans, and to think of wandering with her wherever two people can wander, and when the two people are man and wife that is virtually everywhere. He was very ready for that dream of life.

Besides, if there is anything out of the way in the conditions of a new beginning, it is always a good thing to go abroad.

Little anomalies which stand out from the surface of quiet life at home look so much less in the atmosphere of strange places and among the varieties of travel. The best way to forget that there has been once a great gap between two who are to be one, and a lifetime passed by each in surroundings so different, is to go far away and make new joint associations for each which will bridge over that severance. Neither of them gave this reason: she, perhaps, because she was unconscious of it; he, because he had no desire to state the case either to the world or to her—or even to himself. He was, in his way, with the many precautions which he had taken to keep disagreeable subjects at a distance, a genuine philosopher in the old-fashioned sense of the word.

Accordingly they went abroad, for something more than the longest honeymoon, the black-browed children accompanying them more or less, that is, they performed certain journeys in the wake of the pair, and were settled here and there, at suitable centres, with all the attendance of skilled nurses and governesses which wealth makes it so easy to procure, while Lady Car and her husband pursued their further way, never altogether out of reach. She never forgot she was a mother even in the first rapture of her new happiness. And he was very good to the children. At their early age most children are amusing, and Mr. Beaufort was eminently gentle and kind. His wife's eyes shone when she saw him enter into their little lives as if they had been his own. What a thing for them to have such a man from whom to derive their first ideas of what a man should be! What a thing! She stopped and shuddered when she realised her own meaning; and yet how true it was—that the instructor they might have had, the example, the warning, the man who was their father, had been taken away, to leave the room open for so much better a teacher, for a perfect example, for one who would be a real father to them! Poor children! Lady Car felt for them something of the conventional pity for the fatherless even in the midst of the swelling of her heart over this great gift that had come to them. Their father indeed!

The years of the honeymoon flew like so many days of happiness. They went almost everywhere where a sea voyage was not indispensable, for Lady Car was a very bad sailor. They avoided everything that could have been troublesome or embarrassing in the conversations, and were quite old married people, thoroughly used to each other, and to all their mutual diversities of feeling and ways of thinking, before they returned home. They were

both vaguely aware that the home-coming would be a trying moment, but not enough so to be afraid of it or resist the conviction that the time had come when it was no longer possible to put it off. It was before they returned home, however, in the first consultations over their future dwelling, that the first real divergence of opinion arose.

CHAPTER II.

‘WE must think of where we are going to live,’ Lady Car said; ‘we have never discussed that question. The world is all before us where to choose—’

The boat lay faintly rocking upon the little wavelets from which the ruddy reflection of the sunset was just fading. The beautiful outline of the mountains on the Savoy side stood out blue and half-cold against the glowing west, the Dent du Midi had still a flush of rose colour upon its pinnacles, but had grown white and cold too in the breadth of its great bosom. Evening was coming on, and, though there was still little chill in the air, the sentiment of the September landscape was cold. That suspicion of coming winter which tells the birds so distinctly that it is time to be gone breathed a hint to-night into human faculties more obtuse. Carry threw her shawl round her with a little shiver which was quite fantastic and unnecessary. She did not really mean that it began to be cold, but only that something had made her think of a fireside.

He was seated in front of her with his oars resting idly in the rowlocks. It was a lovely night, and they were close to their temporary home, within a few minutes of the shore. ‘Where we are going to live?’ he said. ‘Then you don’t think of going to your own house.’

She started a little. He would never have found it out had they been on solid ground, but the boat responded to every movement. It was only from this that he knew he had startled her, for she recovered herself immediately, and said, ‘Would you like that, Edward?’ in a voice which she evidently meant to be as easy as usual, but from which consciousness was not altogether banished.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘my love, it will be the time of year for Scotland, and I suppose there is plenty of game; but I neither like nor dislike Car. I have not thought about it. I suppose I had taken

it for granted that your own house would be the place to which you would go.'

'I never thought of it as my own home,' she said, in a low, hurried tone, which he could scarcely hear. 'Oh, no, no. I could not go there.'

'Well,' he said cheerfully, 'then of course we sha'n't go there. I don't care where we go; wherever you are, there is my home. I had not known one till I had you: it is for you to choose.'

She said nothing more for a time, but leant a little over the side of the boat, putting down her hand into the darkening ripples. 'After all, the lake is as warm as if it were summer still,' she said. It was she who had introduced the subject, but something had blown across her, a breath from the past, which had taken all the pleasure out of it. She shivered a little again, with a contradictoriness of which she was unaware. 'There must have been snow somewhere, I think, up among the hills.'

'It is you who are blowing hot and cold, Carry,' he said, smiling at her. 'I think myself it is a perfect evening. Look at the last steamer, passing along against the line of the hills, with its lights, and crammed with tourists from stem to stern. Shall we go in? There's time enough before it gets here, but I know you don't like the wash.'

'I don't like anything that agitates the water, or anything else, perhaps.'

'Not so bad as that; it is I who am most tolerant of the dead level. You like a little agitation, or commotion, or what shall I call it?'

'Do you think so, Edward? No, I love calm; I am most fond of peace, the quiet lake, and the still country, and everything that goes softly.'

'My love,' he said, 'you like what is best always, and the best has always movement in it. You never liked monotony. Let things go softly, yes, but let them go; whereas I can do very well without movement. I like to lie here and let the water sway us where it pleases; you want me to take the oars and move as we will.'

'Yes,' she said, with a soft laugh, 'perhaps I do. You see through me, but not altogether,' she added, with another hasty movement, betrayed once more by the boat.

'No, not altogether,' he said, with a look which, in the gathering dimness of the twilight, she did not perceive. Besides, his head was turned away, and his mind also. She hoped indeed

he did not, he would never divine the almost horror that had sprung up in her at the idea which he had taken so calmly, that of going back to what he called her own house. Her own house! it had never been hers. She thought that she would never go back then to a place full of the old life that was past, thank God! yet never could be quite past so long as her recollection so ached at the thought of it. It seemed to Lady Car that if she went back she might find that *he* was still there, and that everything that had been since was but a dream.

The night falls faster in these regions than in the lingering North. It was almost dark already, though so short a time since the sun set. The steamer came rustling along, more audible than visible, a bustling shadow against the opal gleam of the water and the cold blue of the hills, with its little bright lights like jewels, and swift progress, throbbing along through the heart of the twilight. Lights began to appear in the windows of the tall houses along the bank. The night was gradually stealing into the vacant place of the day. The steamer came on with a rush of purpose and certain destruction, and roused her from her thoughts to a little nervous tremor. 'I wish you would take the oars, Edward, as you say, and let us go in, please. I know it will do us no harm; but——'

'You are frightened all the same,' he said, leisurely settling to the oars.

'It is like a spirit of evil,' she cried.

He took the boat in, making haste to free her from that little nervous thrill of apprehension, though with a laugh. She was aware that she was fantastic in some things, and that he was aware of it. It was a little imperfection that did no harm. A woman is the better of having these little follies. He felt a fond superiority as he rowed her in with a few strokes, amused at her sense of danger. And it was not till some time later, after they had climbed a somewhat rugged path to their villa among the trees, and had looked into the room where little Janet lay fast asleep, and then had supped cheerfully at a table close to the broad window, that the subject was resumed. By this time all the noises were stilled, a full moon was rising slowly, preparing to march along the sky in full majesty in the midst of the silent tranquillity of the night; there was not a breath of air stirring, not a cloud upon the blue heavens, which were already almost as clear as day by the mere resplendence of her coming over the solid mountains, with their many peaks, which 'stepped along the deep.'

The steamer had rustled away to its resting-place, wherever that was. The tourists had found shelter in the hotels, which shone with their many lights along the edge of the lake. These big caravansaries were unseen from the villa, all that was noisy and common was out of sight; the lake all still, not a boat out, with a silver line of ripples making a straight but broken line across the large glimmer of its surface; the dark hills opposite, with a silver touch here and there, and the great open-eyed, abundant moon above looking down upon them, they and she the only things living in that wonderful space which was all beauty and calm. They sat looking out for some time without saying anything. Such a night is in itself a sort of ecstasy, especially to those who want nothing, and with whom, as with the whole apparent world stretched out before them, all is well.

‘And to think we shall have to leave all this presently and enter into the fret and care of settling down!’ he said, with a half-laugh. ‘I interrupted you, dear, to-night when you were talking of that. I suppose it was I that diverted your thoughts. Since it is not to be your Towers, where is it to be?’

‘Not my Towers,’ she said, with a little half-reproachful look at him and a sudden clasping together of her lightly interlaced fingers.

‘Well, let us say Tom’s Towers; but in present circumstances it is very much the same.’

Once more a little shiver ran over her, though there was no chill at all in the soft air that came in from the lake and the moonlight. But her voice was a little uncertain with it, as if her teeth had chattered. ‘Don’t talk of it,’ she said; ‘I want no Towers. I want not a *place* at all, or any quarters, but a house, a pretty house, just big enough for us and them, somewhere, wherever you would like, Edward.’

‘I shall like what you like,’ he said.

‘But that is not what I wish at all; I want you to tell me what will please *you*. You would like to be within reach of the great libraries, within reach of what is going on. No one can write what is to live without being within reach—’

He shook his head. ‘You are too partial in your estimate of what I am likely to do; so long as I am within reach of you—and thank God nothing can put me out of that!—I don’t know that I care for anything more.’

‘That is what I should say, Edward,’ she said, with some vehemence, ‘not you. Do you think I am such a silly woman as

to wish you to be entirely occupied with me? No, no; that is the woman's part.'

'Well,' he said, with his usual soft laugh, 'mine is the feminine *rôle*, you know, to a great extent. Fortunately, my disposition quite chimes in with it.'

'What do you mean by the feminine *rôle*?'

'My love, I don't mean anything. I mean that life was too many for me when you and I were parted. I was the divided half, don't you know, "of such a friendship as had mastered time." Being sundered from my mate, time mastered me: I took to floating, as you don't like to do, even on the lake.'

'Edward,' she cried, 'if anything could make it more dreadful to me to think of that time, it would be hearing you speak so.'

'Don't,' he said, 'there is no occasion; after all, neither time nor anything else masters one if it is not in one's nature. You think too well of me, Carry. Some people are made to float.'

'And what was I then?' she said. 'I was swept away. I could not resist the force against me. It was worse for me, oh! far worse, Edward, than for you. I was caught by the torrent: there was no floating in my case. Perhaps you will say I was made to be carried away.'

'My darling,' he said, 'that's all over and past. Don't let us think of what is done with. Here we are now, two people, not very old, quite able to enjoy all the good things of this life, and who have got them, thank Heaven! in a large share. What would you and I have attained with all the fighting possible, compared to the happiness of being together, having each other's constant company? And we have got that, with many pretty things besides,' he added, with his gentle laugh.

Lady Car felt the words like a flood pouring to her lips, but she was silent; how could she speak? Did it never occur to him how these pretty things were attained—how it was that he and she sat out here by this window looking out upon Lake Lemman and the moonlight in circumstances such as only rich people can secure, both of them to start with being so poor—how it was that they had been able to wander about together, a pair of lovers, for years, with all the accessories of happiness as well as the happiness itself? She clasped her slight fingers together till the pressure hurt; but she said nothing, having nothing—having far too much to say. Such thoughts had glanced across her mind before, faintly, for a moment. She could not have told why they had become so much more vivid now. It was, no doubt, because of the change

which was about to take place in their life, the giving up of the wandering, the settling down. Her thoughts carried her away altogether as she sat gazing out with vacant eyes at the lake and the moonlight, forgetting where she was and that she had an answer to make to the question addressed to her. At last her husband's gentle voice, so refined and soft, startled her back to the reality of the moment.

'You don't say anything, Carry. If I were of a jealous temper I might ask whether, perhaps, you were beginning to doubt? but I don't, I don't, my love; you need not defend yourself. We both know that is the best that life could give us, and it has come to us almost without an effort. Isn't it so? For my part, I've got all I want, and the rest of the circumstances are indifferent to me—where we live or what we do—you in my house and my home—and my occupation—and my content. I want no more.'

Could anything be said more sweet to a woman? According to all the conventionalities, no—according to many of the most natural feelings, no. What could be better than each other's constant society, to be together always, to share everything, to own no thought that was not within the charmed circle of their happiness? As he said these words slowly, with little pauses between, she took in all the sweetness of them, with a commentary in her mind that was not sweet, an impatience which scarcely could be controlled, a blank sensation as of impossibility which held back the impatience. Was there not something more to be said—something more?

Mr. Beaufort had lit his cigarette, which was so habitual to him, so completely the breath of his reflective leisure and gentleness and calm, that the most sensitive of women could not have objected to it; nothing so aggressive as a cigar ever touched his lips, as little as any lady could he tolerate a pipe. The little curl of blue smoke, the pungent but aromatic odour, the very attitude of the shapely hand holding it, were characteristic. The smoke curled softly upwards from his soft brown beard and moustache. He was a very handsome man, handsomer in his way than Carry, whose nose was a trifle too long and her mobile lips a trifle too thin. She was, indeed, a little too thin altogether, whereas he was perfect in the fullness of his manhood, just over forty, but as young and strong as, and enjoying his youth and strength more than, at twenty-five. She looked at him and was silent. Is not a man better than a woman at that age above all? Is not he more likely to have discovered the real secret of life? Was not he better able

to judge than Carry, a creature who had never been wise, who had been hurried, passive, through so many horrors, and dragged out of a tragedy of awful life, to be landed at last on this pleasant shore? Surely, seeing it must be so, her troubled mind made a wild circle from the point where they had parted until this, when they were one, and for a moment, in the dimness behind his chair, it seemed to Lady Car that she saw a spectre rise. She almost thought a shadowy face looked at her over Beaufort's head—a face black-browed, with big, light, fiery eyes, burning as she had often seen them burn—the same eyes that were closed in sleep in little Janet's crib—the same that sometimes gloomed out from her little boy's dark countenance. Her faithful recollection made his picture on the air while Beaufort took dainty puffs of his cigarette. He had no such ghost to daunt him, his memory was pure and calm, while hers was filled with that dreadful shadow, and with reason, for without that shadow this happiness could never have been. What a thought for a woman—what a thought! and to think that it should never once cross the imagination of the man who was enjoying all the other had lost—all and so much more, and that but for the other this happiness could never have been!

These thoughts came like a wave over Carry while she sat with her fingers clasped tight, arrested, dumb, incapable of any reply. What a blessed thing that even one's nearest and dearest cannot divine the quick thoughts that come and go, the visions that flash across us, while we sit by their side and reveal nothing! If Beaufort could have seen that black-browed spectre, and realised all that Tonance had brought for him, would he have maintained that attitude of thoughtful leisure, that calm of assured satisfaction and happiness? To be sure he did know; there was no secret in it; everybody knew. There was nothing wrong, no guilt, nothing to blush for. The shame was all fanciful, as was that sense of her husband's strange obtuseness and want of perception which had seized upon Carry, as if they had been horrible things, when they were quite innocent, natural things, which she ought to have most desired for him. It was curious, too, to think that between two people who loved each other so, who were so entirely in sympathy, one could be so unimpressed by the feelings of the other; that the air should be so full for her of ghosts, of passion, and misery past, of the strange, horrible thought that it was by those passions and miseries that she had purchased both for him and herself this calm, and yet that he should divine nothing, but think it only a

light question of locality, of where to settle down, of a desirable neighbourhood! Apparently the lightness of the decision they had to make, its entirely unimportant character, struck him as he lay back in his chair with his face towards the lake and the moonlight, and the faint blue curl of fragrant smoke rising in the air. 'I'll tell you what we'll do,' he said suddenly, with a laugh, 'to facilitate this tremendous decision. We'll take a succession of houses in different places, and find out by experiment which we like best.'

She brought herself back to the triviality of the discussion with a gasp, as if she had fallen, and with a great effort to dismiss those other thoughts. 'But that would be no better than travelling,' she said, 'of which I am a little tired. I want a home of my own, a house which belongs to no one else,' she added, with a slight shiver, 'but you and me, Edward, no ghosts of other people in it.'

'Do you call their little pictures ghosts?' he said, looking round at the dim walls, which were hung with portraits of the Swiss family to whom the villa belonged; 'not lovely ones certainly, but quite innocent. Then, Carry my love, do just as you please. I shall come with you, like Tom and Janet, to see the new place. If you choose one that's very ugly and out of the way, we will all protest. But, so far as I am concerned, it can't be ugly while you are there,' he said, putting his hands upon hers with a tender pressure. Then added, with a look of solicitude, putting away the cigarette, 'Why, you are in a fever, Carry. Your poor little hands are like fire. I hope you haven't taken cold on the lake.'

'I never take cold,' she said, smiling. 'I suppose it is mere silliness, thinking that this time is over, and that we are going back to the world.'

'If that vexes you, my darling, don't let us go back to the world.'

'Edward, you make me wild, you are so indifferent! You speak as if nothing mattered, as if we could go on and just please ourselves and think of nothing else for ever.'

'Well, my love, I tell you nothing matters to me except yourself, and I don't think the world would mind much. But don't be vexed, Carry. I know the boy must go to school and all the rest of it. We'll do our duty like men—I mean like women, which is far more thorough. And, for my part, I'm not a bit afraid of the world. Even London I can face quite tranquilly with you by my side, especially as at this time of the year there's nobody there.'

'Oh, Edward!' she said, with a tender exasperation; 'it is very soothing to be everything in the world to the man you love; and yet——'

CHAPTER III.

THEY all came home, as people say—though it was no home to which they were coming, and they had been very much at home in their Swiss villa, notwithstanding the portraits of the Swiss owners of the place on all the walls. It is very delightful after a long absence to come home when that familiar place is open and waiting for you, and the children run about the rooms in a tumult of joy, recognising everything, and you settle into your old chair, in your old corner, as if you had never been away. It is quite a different thing when a family comes home to settle down. Looking for a house is apt to be a weary operation, and a small house in London in autumn, in the meantime, is not very gay. But, on the other hand, in October London is not the dismal place it often appears to the stranger: there are still days of bright and sunny weather; the brown grass in the parks has begun to recover itself a little, the trees grow red and yellow, and lend a little light of their own to supplement the skies. Though St. James's Park is rarely more than in monotone, like a drawing in sepia, the wider breadths between the Marble Arch and Hyde Park Corner are brighter, and there is a little stir in the air of people coming back. It was rather a depressed and downcast family party that arrived after a brief but rough crossing of the Channel and all the wear and tear of the journey—Lady Car very pale, with lines on her forehead that showed all the freshly awakened anxiety with which the sight of her native country, involving, as it did, the renewing of many responsibilities and of life in its commonplace aspect after a long holiday, had filled her; little Janet, very fretful and tired, almost paler than her mother, with her black brow and black hair, and big blue lips accentuating the whiteness of her face; Tom, distracted with the confinement and the impossibility of any play or commotion beyond that which could be carried on within the limited space of a railway carriage, exasperated and exasperating; and an attendant group of tired maids, rendered half frantic by his pranks and the impossibility of keeping him in order. Mr. Beaufort had an immense superiority amid this group. He had not turned a hair, the rough crossing

had no effect upon him. He was very kind to little Janet, who had succumbed, and was quietly miserable, lying on a bench, and he took the tenderest care of his wife, who never at the worst moment lost her air of distinction or was humbled to a common level even by the waves of the Channel. His tall figure, in a long ulster, with his fine brown beard blowing a little in the wind, his cigarette always giving forth a curl of dainty smoke, was a comfort to see, even at a distance, facing the breeze at the other end of the ship. Tom, who would not be kept down, clung to his stepfather, whom on other occasions he showed no great love for, trotting after him, standing in his shelter, with little legs set well apart, and now and then a clutch at the ulster to steady himself, characteristically selecting the most sturdy member of the party to hold by. When the party tumbled into the hotel in the wintery evening, half dazed with fatigue, Beaufort was still the master of the situation. He was quite fresh and self-possessed. Coming back to England, which oppressed Lady Car with so many thoughts, did not affect him any more than crossing to Paris, or to Vienna, or to any other capital. The fact of beginning a new chapter of existence did not affect him. He felt it, indeed, to be no new chapter of existence, only a continuance of the former. He was pleased enough to arrive, not sorry to end the wandering, glad enough to settle down. It meant rather rest to him than any excitement of a new beginning. He was half amused at and altogether indulgent and tolerant of Carry's fancy about not going to her own house. It was, perhaps, a little absurd, for Scotland, of course, was the right place to go to at this time of the year; and to look for a new house in a new place, when a house that belongs to you, in the most eligible position, is standing vacant, was, no doubt, a strange caprice. But if that was how she felt, far should it be from him to cross her. He was not a great sportsman. A day or two's shooting, even a week or two, perhaps, could not harm any man, but he did not very much care if he never touched a gun. Still it was so obvious that it was the natural place to go to. He smiled to himself as he walked to the club after dinner, taking himself off that she might get to bed, to the rest she wanted so much, at this caprice of hers. Dear Carry, if it had been a much greater matter, so far as he was concerned, she should have her way; but he allowed to himself, with a smile, that it was a little silly. When you have been married for a time you are able to allow this without any derogation to your divinity. He admired and loved

her as much as a man could do, but it was a pleasure to feel that a little indulgence had to be exercised, to mingle now and then with his chivalrous reverence and love. He would do nothing to cross her. She should get her house where she pleased, furnish it—with some aid from his own taste—how she pleased, and be happy as she would. He smiled as he walked along the familiar streets: it was a pleasure to be in London again. It was a pleasure to be so well off, he who had often been poorly enough off, doubtful sometimes whether he could afford to order his dinner at the club. All that was over now, and he had no objection to owe it to his wife. What did it matter which of them had the money? Had he possessed it, how gladly would he have spent it upon Carry, to give her everything that heart could desire! This is, when one comes to think of it, the real generosity, the most noble way of taking such a matter. To think that it was not Carry's money, but the money of Tonance, that made everything so comfortable for them, happily did not dwell in his mind as it did in hers. He did not even think of it—it was so of course, and of course she had purchased this competence which she shared with her second husband by being an excellent wife to the previous husband, and winning his trust and confidence. Mr. Beaufort luckily did not feel that there was any reason for dwelling upon that side of the question.

Next morning the whole party was revived and cheerful. The children, when they burst into the room, after a long enforced waiting in the temporary nursery which looked to the back, and from which they saw nothing but chimneys and the backs of other houses, rushed to the large window of the room in which Lady Car was breakfasting, with a scream of pleasure. To look out upon the busy road full of carriages and people, and the trees and space of Hyde Park beyond, delighted them. Little Tom stood smacking the whip which was his perpetual accompaniment, and making ejaculations. 'Oh, I say! What lots and lots of people! There's a pony! but he can't ride a bit, that fellow on it. Where's he going to ride? What's inside those gates? is it a palace or is it a park, or what is it? I say, Beau!—what a liar he is, Jan! he said there was nobody in London—and there's millions!'

'Tom,' said Lady Car; 'if you say such things you will be sent away.'

'Let him talk,' said Beaufort; 'he is quite right from his point

of view. You must remember, Tom, that, though you're a clever fellow, you don't know everything; and there may be millions of people in London though there's nobody.'

They both turned upon him incredulous faces, with that cynicism of childhood which is as remarkable as its trust, overawed by a sense of his superior knowledge, yet quite unconvinced of his good faith. Their faces were very like each other—rather large and without colour, their eyebrows shaggy and projecting, their large round eyes *à fleur de tête*. Janet's little red mouth, which was her pretty feature, was open with suspicion and wonder. Tom's bore an expression of half-assumed scorn. He was a little afraid of 'Beau,' and had an alarmed belief in him, at the bottom of much doubt of his meaning and resistance generally.

'You seem to have a great budget of correspondence this morning, Car.'

'From the house-agents; there seem to be houses to be had everywhere. Instead of any difficulty in finding one, we shall only be troubled where to choose. What do you say to Richmond? the river is so lovely, and the park so delightful for the children, and——'

'If Tom is going to school, as I suppose he is, there will only be one child to consider, and little Jan is not *difficile*.'

'Am I going to school, mother?' Tom faced round again suddenly from the window and stood against the light with his legs apart, a very square, solid little form to reckon with.

'You must, my dear boy; your education has been kept back so long. To be sure, he knows French,' said Carry, with a wistful look at her husband, seeking approval, 'which so few boys of his age do.' Mr. Beaufort had considered that it would be advantageous for Tom to be at school before now.

'I don't mind,' said the boy. 'I like it. I want to go. I hated all those French fellows—but they're different here.'

'The first thing they will ask you at Eton is whether you will take a licking,' said Beaufort; 'that was how it was in my day.'

'I won't,' cried Tom; 'not if it was the biggest fellow in the school. Did you, Beau?'

'I can't remember, it's so long ago,' said the stepfather. 'No, not Richmond, if you please, Car; it's pretty, but it's cockney. Sunday excursions spoil all the places about London.'

'Windsor? One would still have the river within reach, and rides in the forest without end.'

'Windsor still less, Carry my love. It's a show place. Royal

persons always coming and going, and crowds to stare at them. If you love me, no.'

'That's a large argument, Edward. We should not live in the town, of course, and to see the Queen driving about would always be a little excitement.'

'Does she drive in a big umbrella like the gentlemen upon the omnibus?' said Janet, whose eyes had been caught by that wonder. Tom had seen it too, and was full of curiosity, but kept his eye upon Beaufort to see whether he would laugh at the question.

'Much grander, with gold fringe and a little royal standard flying from the top,' said Beaufort gravely. 'You know the Doge at Venice always had an umbrella, and other great princes.'

Tom stared very steadily, with his big, round eyes, to watch for the suspicion of a smile, but, seeing none, ventured, with a little suppressed doubt and defiance of the possibly 'humbugging' answer, 'Who are the men on the omnibuses? They can't all be princes; they're just like *cochers*,' cried Tom.

'Don't you trust to appearances, my boy. Did you never hear that the greatest swells drove mail coaches? Not Windsor, Car, not Windsor.'

'Surrey, Edward? Guildford, Haslemere, Dorking—some-where in that direction?'

'At Dorking we should be in the way of the battle, Tom.'

'I should like that,' cried the boy; 'and I suppose *you* can fire a gun, Beau,' he added, after a moment's hesitation, scrutinising his stepfather closely, glad to have the chance of one insult, but something afraid of the response.

'Tom!' cried his mother, in a warning tone.

'More or less,' said Beaufort languidly; 'enough to hit a Dutchman if there was one before me—you know they're very broad. At Guildford people are buried on the top of a hill for the sake of the view. Yes, I think Surrey would do.'

'Am I to go to Eton straight off, mother—is that in Surrey? I want to go a good long way off. I don't want to be near home. You would be coming to see me, and Jan, and kiss me, and call me "Tom," and make the other fellows laugh.'

'What should you be called but Tom?' said Lady Car, with a smile.

'Tonance!' cried the child with pride, as who should say Plantagenet. She had been looking at him, smiling, but at this utterance of the boy Lady Car started and turned burning red, then

coldly pale. Why should she? Nothing could be more fantastic, more absurd, than the feeling. She had done no harm in making a second marriage, in which she had found happiness, after the first one, which had brought nothing but misery. She had offended against no law, written or unwritten. She had wiped out Tonance and his memory, and all belonging to him (except his money), for years. Why should the name which she had once borne, which was undeniably her son's name, affect her so deeply now? The smile became fixed about the corner of her mouth, but the boy, of course, understood nothing of what was passing in his mother's mind, though he stared at her a little as if he did, increasing her confusion. 'The fellows never call a fellow by his christened name,' said Tom, great in the superiority of what he had learned from various schoolboys on their travels. These were things, he was aware, which of course women didn't know.

'You'd better come and have a stroll with me, Master Tom,' said Beaufort. 'I'll show you Piccadilly, which is always something; as for the park, you wouldn't care for it: there are no riders in the Row now. You see, as I told you, there's nobody in London. Come, get your hat, quickly.'

'Me too,' said little Janet, with a pout of her small mouth.

'Not any ladies to-day, only two fellows, as Tom says, taking a stroll together.'

'In a moment, Beau!' cried Tom, delighted, rushing to get his hat. 'I told you, Jan, old Beau's a gentleman—sometimes,' the boy added, as his sister ran after him to see what arrangements of her own she could make to the same end.

'You are very good to them, Edward—oh! very good. How can I ever thank you?' said Lady Car, with tears in her eyes. Her nerves had been a little shaken by that shock, and by the vain perception that stole over her of two parties in the family, two that would become more distinctly two by the progress of years, unlike in nature and constitution, and even in name. It is not necessary to insist upon the family name of children travelling with their mother. No one had been much the wiser during these years of wandering. But Tom's 'Tonance!' was a revelation, and opened before her possibilities unknown.

'Good, am I? That's all right, that's something to the credit side, but I was not aware of it,' said Beaufort, in his easy way; 'all the same,' he added, laughing, 'Master Tom will want looking after if we are to make anything of him. He will want a tight hand, which, I fear, does not belong either to you or me.'

It cost Lady Car a pang to hear even this mild expression of opinion about her boy. A mother says many things, and feels many things, about her children which no one else may say before her. She looked at him wistfully, with a faint smile, which was full of pain. 'He is only a child,' she said, apologetically, 'and then he will get that at school.' She could not contradict him, and she could not argue with him. Poor little Tom! he was her own, though he might not be all she wished him to be—the plea rose to her lips unconsciously that he was fatherless, that he had drawbacks to contend against, poor child. What a plea to form even unconsciously in her mind! She looked at her husband with such a troubled and wistful appeal that his heart smote him. He laid his hand upon her head caressingly, and stooped to kiss her.

'To be sure,' he said; 'the boy will be all right, Car. He has plenty of spirit, and that is the best thing, after all. Ready, Tom? Come along, then. I'm ready too.'

Lady Car followed him with her wistful eyes. They were not full of admiring delight, as when a mother watches her children going out with their father, proud of both him and them, and of their love for each other. What it must be to have a life without complications, full of unity, in which a woman can feel like that! Carry longed to whisper in her child's ear, to bid him, oh! to be good, to mind what Beau said to him, to behave like a gentleman to one who was so kind—so kind! But she had to let him go without that warning, fearing that he would be disrespectful, and come back in disgrace, though Edward was so gentle with him, and never complained, except to say that he would want a tight hand. How well she knew that he wanted a tight hand! and how certain she was that it was not from her he would get that needful restraint! And from whom, then? At school, from some master who would know nothing about him, nor give him credit for the complications in his lot, his having no father. Perhaps, she said to herself in her troubled thoughts, it is better for a boy to have any kind of a father than no father at all. His father would have flogged him, had no mercy upon him, taught him to swear and swagger, and ride wild horses, and run wild about the country. Would that have been better? She stopped, with a shudder, unable to pursue the question. Better—oh heavens! But for her what would it have been? She turned to meet little Janet's large eyes fixed upon her, and started with alarm and a kind of horror. It seemed to her that the child must have read her thoughts.

'Are you cold, mozer?' Janet said. Though she was eight, she

had still difficulties with the 'th,' difficulties perhaps rather of a foreigner than a child.

'No, dear,' said Lady Car, again shuddering, but smiling upon the little girl. 'It is not at all cold.'

'Mozer, take me out with you, since Tom has gone with Beau. I don't want to go out with nurse. I want to be wiz you.'

'Dear,' said Carry, wooing her little daughter for a favourable reply with soft caresses, 'isn't Beau kind to Tom? Don't you love Beau?'

The child searched her face, as children do, in an unconscious but penetrating search for motives unknown. Janet saw that her mother was wistful and unassured, though she did not probably know how to name these motives. 'I do well enough,' she said. 'I don't think of him. Mozer, take me out with you.'

And this was all that could be got out of Janet. The black brow and the dark hair made her look so much more resolute and determined than usual that poor Carry was almost afraid of her little girl, and believed that she hid beneath that careless answer thoughts and feelings which were quite determined and well-assured.

CHAPTER IV.

THE house was found after a great many not unpleasurable researches—little expeditions, now and then, which Lady Caroline and her husband took together, with reminiscences of their first honeymoon travels, which had been so sweet. She forgot, as a woman is so ready to do, all the little deceptions and disappointments of the intervening years, and when they found at last the very thing they wanted the elation and exhilaration of a new beginning entered fully into Carry's mind. If Edward had shown himself too contented with his life, too little ambitious, too indifferent to any stimulant, there was something in the fact of being unsettled, of having no certain motive of his life, of moving about constantly from one place to another, which would very well account for that. But when he was no longer subject to interruption, when his time and his thoughts were free, who could doubt that a new spring of energy would burst forth? In the old days, when they had first met, he had been full of projects. Was not that one of the charms that had caught her girlish heart? He had so fully meant to make himself a great influence

in the world, to help to sway the course of events, to make the world a better place. They had talked of that before even they talked of love—and her enthusiasm had been roused and fired by his. He had told her—how well she remembered!—that it was a mistake of dull minds to think that it was hard to obtain an influence upon one's fellow-men. On the contrary, if you are but in earnest—in such earnest that none could mistake your sincerity and true feeling—then the response, especially of the young, especially of the working people, whom it was of so much importance to influence for good, was most ready, almost immediate. So he said, discoursing for hours as they wandered about the Swiss valley in which they had met, Carry Lindons all in a flame of enthusiastic listening, responding with her whole heart. What a beautiful lot it had seemed to her to share this work and this life of this new crusader, this chief of men! She was not Lady Caroline then, but a poor little girl in a faded frock, her father far out of the succession, and no grandeur of rank or anything else surrounding the wandering family. Carry's imagination went back to that moment with a leap, ignoring, oh so thankfully! all that had gone between. She had hardly done much with her unfaithfulness to congeal her Edward's enthusiasm, to turn him from his hopefulness to misanthropy and pessimism. He had fallen into apathy because he had been forsaken and unhappy. But now everything was to begin anew—a settled home on English ground, a position of his own in which his leisure and his peace should be undisturbed and his mind free to throw itself into the old studies. Who could doubt that with all this his energy and his enthusiasm would come back to him again?

The house was near one of the charming little towns of Surrey. It was on the slope of a hill, a house partly antique for beauty, and with a new part built on behind, happily out of sight, for comfort. A wide landscape of breezy undulations stretched before the windows; the town, upon another low hill, all its red roofs picturesquely outlined among the trees, stood out a charming object in the view, not near enough to add any association of noise or gossip. The very railway ran in a cutting, invisible, though near enough to be exceedingly convenient, nothing but a puff of steam showing now and then over the trees. The landscape embraced, as it were, two worlds—heather and fir trees on one side, luxuriant English cornfields, woods, and villages on the other. The altitude of their hillside was not great, but as there was nothing greater about it, it might have been Mont Blanc for

the feeling of wide atmosphere and sky ; yet they were within a mile or two of the little country town, and within an hour and a half of London ! What could be more delightful, combining every advantage ? Carry had all the delight of a bride in furnishing her house—nay, of a bridegroom too, for one of her chief cares was to fit up a study for Beaufort, in which every taste should be satisfied. Though she was by nature so gentle and yielding a woman, she it was who was the purveyor of everything, who had the purse in her hands. The only thing upon which Beaufort had made a stand at the time of his marriage was this—that the money which was hers should remain with her, that he should have nothing to do with its expenditure. He had his own little income, which was very small, yet sufficed for his personal wants. He lived a fairy life, without any necessity for money, his house kept for him, his living all arranged, everything that he wanted or could desire coming without a thought ; but he preserved his feeling of independence by having nothing to do with the expenditure. Thus Carry combined everything in her own person, the bride and the bridegroom—even something of the mother. Her drawing-room was fitted up according to all the new lights. She had weaknesses towards the æsthetic, and something of the delicacy of those heroines of Mr. Du Maurier whose *bibels* are their religion, and who cannot be happy in a room which has curtains not of the right tint. But even the anxiety to secure everything right in the drawing-room was secondary to her anxiety about the library, which was to be Beaufort's room, the future centre of all his occupations. He had himself a number of books laid up in various stores, and they had bought a number more in their wanderings—fine old examples in delicate old vellum-like ivory and luxurious editions. Carry was occupied for weeks in arranging them, in procuring the right kind of bookcases, and hanging and decorating the room in just the subdued beauty which is appropriate for a place of study. There was one great window commanding the finest view, there was another looking into a sunny nook of the garden. The writing table stood within reach of the fire, and near that sunny window, so that it might always command both warmth and light. The chairs were few, but luxurious to sit in, and moving at a touch, without noise, upon the deep, mossy softness of the carpet. The bookcases were inlaid and exquisite with lines of delicate sculpture and gilding between the shelves, out of which the mellow gold of the old bindings and the sober background of Russia leather and the tempered

ivory of the vellum showed like a picture. He had not even seen it till it was completed. No lover ever spent upon his lady's boudoir more tender care and delicate fancy than Carry lavished upon her husband's study. When they went down finally to take possession of Easton Manor there were various things incomplete in the rest of the house, but this was perfect. She took him by the arm and led him to the door. 'This is my present to you, Edward,' she said, a little breathless with happiness and anxiety to know if it would please him. At this period when furniture is supposed to make so great a part of our comfort, the moment was intense—would it please him, after all?

It did please him, or, at least, he graciously declared it did, with an enthusiasm perhaps a little strained, but Carry, who was half crying with joy and pleasure, never found this out, if, indeed, there was anything to find out. She ran about the room, pointing out everything—all the details of the arrangements, the drawers for papers, the portfolios for prints, the shelves that could be filled at pleasure, the space that still was vacant to be filled up. Everything that heart could desire was in this dilettante shrine. There was a little picture on the mantelpiece, an original, a lovely little Fra Angelico, in the daintiest of carved shrines, which good luck had thrown in their way in Italy—a gem for an emperor's closet. He gave a little cry when he saw this. 'Carry, your own picture—the one you love best!'

'I shall love it better here than anywhere else,' said Carry, falling a-weeping and a-laughing with a joy that was not hysterical, but only driven to the bounds of all things to find expression. She was so happy! She had never in all her life been so happy before. In her own house, her own home, all hers and his, the sanctuary of their joint life to come. When a woman comes to this climax of happiness, she generally does so more thoroughly with her *arrière-pensée* than a man. Only one thing could have made Carry's bliss more exquisite—if he had done it for her—and yet, on the whole, I am not sure that to have done it for him was not a higher pleasure still. Little Janet had held by her mother's dress coming into the new, strange house, and thus had been swept into this rapture without intention, and stood gazing at it with great eyes, half wondering, half critical. What there was to cry about Janet did not know. She was a spectator, though she was only a child, and broke the spell. Lady Car felt more than Beaufort did what the interruption was. And thus the edge was a little taken off her delight. But in the evening, when Janet

was happily in bed, she led her husband back to his beautiful room. He would rather, perhaps, as a matter of fact, have remained in the uncompleted drawing-room with her. A thing which is incomplete has a charm of its own. He was suggesting various things which were needed to fill up, and enjoying the occupation. He had even made a few rough sketches, rough, yet full of 'feeling,' showing with only a line or two how many improvements could still be made. She was delighted by the suggestions, but a little impatient, longing to make sure that he had seen all the many luxuries provided for himself. She took his arm when he had shown her where he would place the little fantastic Venetian *étagère*. 'Yes, Edward; but I don't want to stay here any longer: I want to spend the first evening in the library, in your own room.'

'In the library,' he said, with a slight vexation; then recovering himself he followed her impulse with the best grace in the world. Poor Carry! it would ill become him not to humour her. 'But is there a lamp there?' he said. She laughed for pleasure at the question. A lamp! There was the most beautiful arrangement of lights which the art of that period had yet devised. The reign of the electric light had not begun, but candles with every kind of silvery shading that had been then invented were round the walls, and the light was so soft, so equable, so diffused, that no electric lighting could have been more perfect. 'You who are so fond of light, how could you think I would forget that?' she said.

'You never forget anything: you are my good angel,' he said, holding her in his arms: the perfect tenderness and the perfect taste went to his heart. 'You are too good to me—and all this is far too good for a useless fellow who never did anything.'

'It is the circumstances that are to blame for that,' she said, vaguely. 'You have never had the leisure and the ease that is necessary for great work.'

He laughed a little, and perhaps coloured too, could she have seen it in the flattering soft glow of the shaded light. 'I am afraid,' he said, 'that a man who is overcome by circumstances is rather a poor sort of creature; but we won't enter into that.'

'No, indeed,' she said; 'there is no such question before the house, Edward. Now sit down in your own chair and let us talk. How many talks we are to have here! This is the place where we shall discuss everything, and you will tell me how your thoughts are taking shape, and read me a page here and there, and here I'll bring my little troubles to be calmed down, but never to interrupt anything, you may trust me for that.'

'My love,' he cried, 'I trust you for everything; but, Carry, I am sadly afraid you are preparing disappointment for yourself. I am by no means sure that I could write anything were I to try; and as for plans——'

'Don't say that, Edward. Don't you remember how we used to talk in the dark old Kander Thal long ago? You had planned it out all so clearly. I think I could write down the plan, and even the names of the chapters, if you have forgotten. But I am sure you have not forgotten. It has only been suspended for want of time—for want of the books you needed—for want—oh! if I might flatter myself so far?—for want, perhaps, of me; but that's the vainest thing to say.'

'It is the only truth in the whole matter,' he said—'for want of you! I think I must have invented that plan on the spot to please you.'

'Hush, hush!' said Carry, putting up her hand to his mouth. 'Don't blaspheme. You were full of it, it was a new world to me. First to think that I *knew* a man with such great things in his mind, then that he would talk to me about it, then that my enthusiasm helped him on a little, that he looked to me for sympathy. Edward,' she said, with a little nervous laugh, changing colour, and casting down her eyes, 'I wrote some little verses about it in the old days, but never finished them, and this morning I found them, and scribbled a little more.'

'My love, my love!' he cried, in a troubled tone, in which love, shame, compunction, and even a far-off trembling of ridicule had place. What could he say to this? The romance, the sentiment, the good faith, the enthusiasm, altogether overwhelmed him. He could have laughed, he could have wept, he did not know what to say. How he despised himself for being so much below her expectations, for being, as he said himself, such a poor creature! He changed colour, her moist eyes, her little verses filled him with shame and penitence, yet a rueful amusement too. The verses were very pretty: he did not despise them, it was only himself whom he despised.

'My darling, that's so long ago! I was a fool, puffed up by your enthusiasm and by seeing that you believed in me. A young man, don't you know, is always something of an actor when he begins to see that a girl has faith in him. It is—how long, Carry?—fifteen years ago?'

'And what of that?' she said. 'If I could pick up my little thread, as I tell you, how much more easily could you pick up your

great one? This was why I wanted to be within reach of London, within reach of the great libraries. It is quite easy to run up for the day to refer to anything you want—indeed, I might do it for you if you were very busy. And I can see that you have no interruptions, Edward. We must settle our hours and everything from that point of view.'

He felt himself at liberty to laugh as she came down to this more familiar ground. 'I fear,' he said, 'all my plans were in the air—they never came to execution of any kind. I don't know even, as I told you, whether I can write *at all*.'

'Edward!' she cried, in an indignant tone.

'Well, my love'—the flattery went to his heart, notwithstanding all he knew against it—'that is the easiest of the matter to be sure; but everybody can write nowadays, and why should the world listen to me more than another? Besides, my favourite questions of social economy, as against political, have all been *exploités* by other hands since then.'

'Not by other hands so capable as yours.'

'Oh, Carry!' he cried, with a laugh in which there was pleasure as well as a little ridicule; 'I fear you have a quite unwarrantable confidence in me; I am only——'

'Hush!' she said, again putting up her hand to his mouth; 'I don't want to hear your opinion of yourself. I am a better judge than you are on that point. Besides, let us hear who have written on that question?' She sat quite upright in her chair. 'Bring them forward, and let them be judged,' she said.

'I cannot bring forth a whole school of writers before your tribunal, my lady. Well,' he said, laughing, 'there's Ruskin for one—who has said all I once wanted to say, in an incomparable way, and gone a great deal further than I could go.'

'Ah!' she cried; 'that is just the whole matter. Mr. Ruskin is incomparable, as you say, but he goes a great deal too far. He is a poet. People adore him, but don't put serious faith in him. Mr. Ruskin has nothing to do with it, Edward: he could not forestall *you*.'

'No, no more than the sun could forestall a farthing candle. Carry, my dear, don't make me blush for myself. Come,' he added, 'let me see the little verses—for the moment that is more to the point. Perhaps when you have showed me how you have picked up your threads I may see how to pick up mine.'

'Should you really like to see them, Edward? They are

nothing: they are very little verses indeed. I have left them in my writing-book.'

'Get them, then,' he said, opening the door for her, with a smile. Poor Lady Car! She raised a happy face to him as she passed, with eyes glistening, still a little moist, very bright, full of sweetness and gentle agitation. The soft sound of her dress, sweeping after her, the graceful movement, the gracious turn of the head, were all so many exquisite additional details to the exquisite room, so perfect in every point, in which she had housed him. But Beaufort's face was full of uneasiness and perplexity. He had floated so far away from those innocent days in the Kander Thal. He had ceased to believe in the panaceas that had seemed all-powerful to him then. The wrongs of political economy and the rights of the helpless had ceased to occupy his mind. He had become one of the helpless himself, and yet had drifted, and been not much the worse. Now he had drifted into the most charming, sunshiny, landlocked harbour, where no fierce wind could trouble him more. He had no desire to invent labours and troubles for himself, to spend his strength in putting up beacons and lighthouses to which the people whom they were intended to help would pay no attention. He opened one of the windows and looked out upon the night, upon the soft, undulating landscape, half-lighted by a misty moon. Everything looked like peace out of doors, peace and every tranquil pleasure that the soul could desire were within. He gave an impatient laugh at himself and his wife, and life in general, as he stood cooling his hot forehead, looking out waiting her return. He was quite contented; why should he be goaded forth to fight with windmills which he no longer believed to be knights in armour? Don Quixote disenchanted, ready himself to burn all his chevalier books, and see the fun of his misadventures, but urged to take the field by some delicate Dulcinea, could not have been more embarrassed and disturbed. It was too annoying to be amusing, and too tender and beautiful either to be angry with or to laugh at. What under these circumstances was a man who had long abandoned the heroic to do?

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

THE most valuable information, from the most distinguished sources, is occasionally neglected. For example, the news that the celebrated house in Berkeley Square is *not* haunted has of late been published abroad in Messrs. Cassell's *Saturday Journal*, and has been welcomed rapturously by Mr. James Payn in the *Illustrated London News*. Yet nobody should have known better than Mr. Payn the real state of affairs, and that some years ago the mansion in 'Buckley Square' which so long stood empty, but by no means swept and garnished, was the joy of the psychical. Country visitors were taken to see the grimy outside of the building, and were informed that here the young guardsman died, of sheer fright, in the presence of the supernatural. The narrative may be read in Miss Broughton's *Tales for Christmas Eve*. In point of fact there was no ghost, and no guardsman. The house was merely unlet in consequence of the terms of a will; and its owner, being unable to dispose of the lease, preferred to live in another house of her own. So it stood empty. But the mind of mankind, unable to account by natural causes for a valuable house eating its head off, invented an ætiological myth, as the learned say, to account for the circumstance. That myth included a ghost, or ghosts, so prone is man to fly to the supernatural. All this has now been stated in print, but I, for one, knew it all long ago. It was, indeed, communicated to the world by nobody less than a spectre himself, in a treatise called *Castle Dangerous*, and published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, edited by Mr. James Payn, who is now so pleased and surprised by the information. We must presume that this intelligent sceptic would not take it as the evidence of a spectre: he did not like the ghost's security. But who should have known better than the affable appearance, who despised the sham ghost of Berkeley Square, and stated the actual truth to the present writer? Naturally, a real ghost condemned the untradesmanlike imitation. But it is certainly peculiar, as Mr. Payn says, that, when there are so many haunted houses, the Psychical Society cannot find a good healthy example. In one case, as I am informed by an investigator, the Society, or a few of it, occupied a haunted house, but nobody saw anything

except the dog. *His* life was made a burden to him, and his bristles were in the erect attitude of superstitious dismay all the time he was there. Dogs have a splendid smell for ghosts, but there is a difficulty in taking their evidence. One would like to see experiments tried by introducing dogs at *séances*: not valuable dogs, for they often die of mere alarm. But this plan, though scientific, may distress Miss Cobbe and the *Spectator*. It seems to partake of the nature of experiments on living animals. That animals can see bogies is attested by universal opinion, and may be read about in a chapter on 'Animism' in *Primitive Culture*. Yet the Psychical Society seems never to have tried any experiments in this direction. Mr. Romanes might do it. His eminent monkey, which discovered the principle of the screw (see *Mental Evolution*), might be shut up alone in a haunted house. The results could not but be important, and might, according to some advanced theorists, awaken religious instincts in the intelligent little creature. For, if man came from the ape, and if man's religion began in ghosts (two theories very much in the air), then to confront a ghost and an ape could not fail to be instructive.

* * *

Perhaps there is room for the following lines, which are *not* a ballade, very much the reverse, though possibly the hasty observer may detect something nefarious in the reference to a 'Prince.' The food of fiction, as the author says, is often excellent. There is a wonderful cold pie in Lord Tennyson's works, perhaps the reader may remember it? But there is not much about meat and drink in Byron. Who can write a poem to hard biscuits and soda-water, the regimen prescribed for his lordship by himself?

THE FOOD OF FICTION.

To breakfast, dinner, or to lunch

My steps are languid, once so speedy;
E'en though, like the old gent in *Punch*,
'Not hungry, but, thank goodness! greedy.'

I gaze upon the well-spread board,
And have to own—oh, contradiction!
Though every dainty I afford,
There's nothing like the food of fiction.

'The better half'—how good the sound!
Of Scott's or Ainsworth's 'venison pasty,'
In cups of old Canary drowned
(Which probably was very nasty).

AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

The beefsteak pudding made by Ruth
 To cheer Tom Pinch in his affliction,
 Ah me! in all the world of truth
 There's nothing like the food of fiction.

The cakes and ham and buttered toast
 That graced the board of Gabriel Varden,
 In Bracebridge Hall the Christmas roast,
 Fruits from the Goblin Market garden.
 And if you'd eat of luscious sweets
 And yet escape from gout's infliction,
 Just read 'St. Agnes' Eve' by Keats—
 There's nothing like the food of fiction.

What cups of tea were ever brewed
 Like Sairey Gamp's—the dear old sinner?
 What savoury mess was ever stewed
 Like that for Short and Codlin's dinner?
 What was the flavour of that 'poy'—
 To use the Fotheringay's own diction—
 Ate by Pendennis, love-sick boy?
 There's nothing like the food of fiction.

Envoy.

Prince, you are young—but you will find
 After life's years of fret and friction,
 That hunger dies—but never mind!
 There's nothing like the food of fiction.

J. G.

* * *

A large number of correspondents have kindly sent variants of a numerical song. A Chaldaic version, which Mr. Cohen forwards, has a kind of rude rhyme, but in substance answers better to *The House that Jack built*, than to the nonsense-creed. 'A Lady's Birth,' 'a Trinity,' 'a Jewry,' and 'a Crucifix' run through another form. The mysterious 'waiter' appears as 'a Cherubim waiter,' and 'a blooming waiter,' and 'the proud street-walker.' Persons curious in Chaldaic may consult the preface of Henderson's *Lancashire Legends* (1831). Another correspondent suggests that the five symbols are the Hands, Feet, and Heart of our Lord, which were often carved on bosses in the ceilings of churches, for example at Eglwys Rhos, near Llandudno, before that form of destruction known to the clergy and architects as

'restoration.' Once more, it is thought that the 'cheerful waiter' may refer to

*Sex sunt hydrice
Plenæ posite
In Cana Galilææ—*

the water vessels of Christ's first miracle: 'waiter' and 'water' have been confused. On the whole it seems probable that the chant is old, and at first of a religious character. Whether originally Semitic, or originally Christian, it has apparently been borrowed by the Hebrew service from that of Rome, or *vice versâ*. The nonsense comes from guesses at the meaning of words forgotten, as in the song of the Arval Brothers in early Latin. Perhaps no more can be learned about the matter, unless we find a similar chant in the speech of non-European peoples, as M. Henri Gaidoz writes that there is a kindred chant in the Moslem service. I must ask many correspondents who have good-naturedly copied local variants to accept my thanks. Any English *märchen*, such as *Cap o' Rushes*, published in the *February Ship*, will be most warmly welcomed. Schoolmasters, and the clergy of all denominations, must surely have chances of rescuing our old English Popular Tales.

* * *

Speaking of English fairy tales, one has often marvelled why they are so scarce and so dull, just like the ballads of England. Both ballads and tales have suffered horribly from chapbook editions. Very early, as it seems, they were made spoil of by very dull men, who wrote them out with idiotic bits of 'gag' or of parochial moralising for the cheap booksellers on London Bridge. These bad printed versions killed the native oral versions; at least this is an explanation which seems plausible. Mr. G. L. Gomme has published certain chapbook stories for the Villon Society, with notes. These are useful, as genuine chapbooks are so expensive, and the notes are valuable. *Tom Hickathrift* seems not to be a *conte* of the old traditional cycle at all, but a local tale. A stone in a church is carved with a 'cross pattée' on the summit of a staff. The rustics, to explain this symbol, have interpreted it as an axle-tree and wheel, used as sword and buckler by a giant, Tom Hickathrift, an assailant or defender of popular rights in a region of marsh-land near Ely. As Hickathrift lived 'in the reign before William the Conqueror,' he *may* (perhaps) have got mixed up with Hereward the Wake in tradition. But a better case of a myth made to explain a work

of art of forgotten significance could hardly be found. The chap-book, *Jack the Giant Killer*, is full of vulgar 'gag' and Fescennine low comedy. As to *Jack in the Beanstalk*, familiar as he is, a version at once good and traditional is very hard to come by, while *Valentine and Orson* is often touched with Radicalism, as George Cruikshank's fairy tales were made into Temperance tracts.

* . *

As to the capital sea-song, *Time for us to Go*, Mr. Leland writes that he is not the author. He picked it up in Philadelphia before the war, and only made one or two slight corrections. Mr. Leland has patched together a pirate's song from floating fragments. Unluckily he thinks it 'too devilish to publish;' but as none of us on this side the water are going pirating, it could not corrupt our young minds. Here is a verse, one of the most pleasing and idyllic:—

Over the quarter,
Over the rail,
Into the water,
Dead as a nail,
Flung like a biscuit,
Hot as a coal,
Where the sharks may take the body
And the devil may take the soul.

This is full of promise; the rest must be very touching, but likely to daunt a superstitious mariner.

* . *

The comparative advantages of being dead or alive have often been debated. The poet, in the following composition, advances reasons for the less popular side, but they seem to have no logical basis, as the dead speaker, *ex hypothesi*, would be incapable of stating his own case in melodious numbers.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

Under the grass and the graveyard clay
Faint fall the voices from overhead.
Rough is the road for the quick to tread.
Breasting the tide and the tempest they—
Mine is the haven of life's hey-day.
They are dying, but I am dead!

Oh, but the daisies and long grass under,
 I, with my myriad lives instead,
 Listening, laughing, I hear them wonder—
They are dying, but I am dead!

I, with my myriad lives again,
 Grass and roses, and leaves and rain,
 They with their struggle with doubt and pain,
 They with the strangling throes to come,
 They with the grip of the grave to dread.
 Ah! how I laugh in my quiet home—
They are dying, but I am dead.

Oh! but the life of me gathering, growing,
 Emmet and butterfly, flower and thorn,
 Poppy and rose in the gold sun glowing,
 Over and over unmade, re-born.

One with the grey of the winter day,
 One with the glint of the sunset gold.
 One with the wind and the salt sea-spray,
 One with the dun of the furrowed mould.

How shall I joy in the world unwitting?
 How shall I lean to the dear warm sun?
 Grub or nightingale—creeping or flitting—
 Nature and I in the end made one.

Only the life of me one with thee:
 Body and soul of us joined and wed.
 Shall we not pity them, I and she,
 They the dying and we the dead?—G. R. T.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions. Contributions received after February 9 will be acknowledged in the April number:—

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The Editor trusts that any persons who are so kind as to contribute to the 'Donna' will send their subscriptions either to the Sisters or to him, and not pay any money at the truck. Money so paid causes much difficulty to the Sisters, as some of the men imagine that it is intended to be distributed among them for free dinners. As has already been pointed out, it is impossible that the 'Donna' should be carried on except on the basis of the men paying their halfpennies.

In the February number Mrs. Chalk's subscription was accidentally entered as 5*s.* instead of 5*l.*

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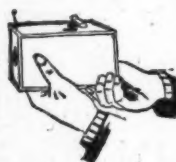
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